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*STUDIES OF CHARACTER FROM THE
OLD TESTAMENT.*

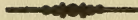
STUDIES OF CHARACTER

FROM

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

BY

THOMAS GUTHRIE, D.D.



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CONTENTS.



	PAGE
✓ ABRAHAM THE FRIEND OF GOD.....	7
ELIEZER THE PATTERN SERVANT.....	50
✓ JOSEPH THE SUCCESSFUL MAN..	83
✓ MOSES THE PATRIOT.....	107
JOSHUA THE COLONIST.....	133
CALEB THE SOLDIER.....	157
BOAZ THE FARMER.....	178
RUTH THE VIRTUOUS.....	205
GIDEON THE DELIVERER.....	224
HANNAH THE MATRON..	241
✓ SAMUEL THE RULER.....	262
JONATHAN THE FRIEND.....	320
✓ DAVID THE AFFLICTED MAN.....	342
SOLOMON THE WISE MAN.....	365
REHOBOAM THE FOOLISH MAN.....	399
JEHU THE ZEALOT.....	418

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1937~~

55
1024
1574
912

314294

STUDIES OF CHARACTER.



Abraham the Friend of God.

A VISIT to Italy is the aim of every artist. Ordinary travellers crowd its palaces, churches, and galleries, to gratify a common curiosity, or enjoy the pleasures their treasures yield to every cultivated mind. Artists seek that beautiful land for a higher purpose. To them it is what our schools and universities are to the student of languages or of science ; and they regard a visit to Italy as such an important, if not essential, part of their education, that I have known a sculptor, on emerging from the straitened circumstances through which he had risen to fame, leave home, wife, and children to go there, and enjoy in mature years the benefits which the poverty of his youth denied him. By a long, careful, and ardent study of their works, the artist hopes, and not without good reason, to catch the spirit of the great masters. Thus he seeks to refine his taste ; to form a high standard of excellence ; and to acquire an eye and hand whereby to approach if not equal, to equal if not surpass, the triumphs of ancient art. The children of this world, as our Lord says, are wise in their generation. With

a care to excel, which, in obeying the apostolic injunction, "covet the best gifts," the children of light would do well to imitate, see how the sculptor surrounds himself, even in his studio, with copies of the most famous statues! He fills his mind with images of the sublime and beautiful; and provides objects for his eye, wheresoever it turns, adapted to kindle his ambition and improve his taste.

Man is so constituted that, even unconsciously, without either intending or attempting it, he imitates what he is familiar with. We speak, for instance, with the peculiar accent of our native district, and—a matter of much more consequence—learn almost certainly to copy in our lives the manners and morals of our ordinary associates. According to vulgar belief, the chameleon becomes red, blue, or green, with the ground it lies on; and, probably with the view of protecting them from their enemies, fishes certainly do take the color of the water they live in, whether it be clear or muddy. Man is endowed with a property akin to this. To that, so pregnant with good or evil, as much as to the pleasure people feel in associating with those of tastes similar to their own, we owe the well-known saying, "Tell me your company, and I will tell you your character." Hence the wisdom of David's practice, "I am the companion of all them that fear thee." Hence also, on the other hand, it happens, to quote a scripture adage, that "Evil communications corrupt good manners."

This property, though many, especially of the young, owe their ruin to it, is not, necessarily, like the poisoned garment bestowed on Hercules, a

fatal gift. It was given by our Maker for good purposes. It may be turned, though nothing can supply the place of Divine grace and a change of heart, to the holiest ends. For as the artist who repairs to Rome, or Florence, to fill his eye with the works of the great masters, imbibes somewhat of their genius, and learns thereby to excel in sculpture, architecture, or painting, the Christian will derive a similar advantage from studying those excellent models of piety and virtue which are found in the biographies of the Bible. Here is a gallery of admirable paintings. Here the student of holy and heavenly arts finds it as profitable as pleasant to pass hours of devout meditation. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." But no part of it more so than the lives of the grand saints of old. While I was musing, says one of them, the fire burned ; and it is not in the nature of things for a Christian man to sit down to his Bible, and turn to the history of its saints, and hold communion with them, without imbibing somewhat of their spirit. As he muses on their virtues and piety, he will feel in holy desires the fires that glowed in their bosoms kindling and burning in his own.

No doubt God's people possess a perfect model in Jesus Christ. He is at once a Propitiation for our sins, and a Pattern for our lives. His is indeed the only life that presents such a faultless model—a complete illustration of the principles on which our lives should be framed. He was what no other man ever was—holy, harmless, and undefiled ; separate from sinners ; a lamb without spot or

blemish ; perfectly fulfilling all the duties man owes to God, and also to his neighbor.

For example, He made it his meat and drink to do his Father's will ; and also to bear it—the mighty load which by its immeasurable and unimaginable pressure forced the blood from his pores, till, crimsoning the flowers, it fell in great drops to the ground, forcing from his lips no complaint nor expression of impatience : groans, indeed, but with the groans that rent his bosom and astonished the dull ear of night, no other cry than this : “ Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not my will but thine be done, O Father ! ” His perfect obedience sprang from perfect love. He loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and all his mind, and all his strength, and all his spirit—doing what we shall never do till, seeing Him, we become like Him as He is. Again, He offered an equally perfect illustration of the second table of the law—of the love we owe to man, as of that man owes to God. In regard to this, the purest, kindest, tenderest, holiest, most generous of men, have never equalled nor approached Him. The pity which moved Abraham to plead with such bold urgency for guilty Sodom ; the affection of Ruth when, throwing her arms around Naomi's neck, she clung to her like a beautiful tendril around a hoar and aged tree, with tears, and kisses, and embraces, saying : “ Entreat me not to leave thee . . . for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge : thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried ; ” the matchless friendship by

whose grave David stood with streaming eyes, moving the roughest of his soldiers with this plaintive cry, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women;" the heart which broke at the fall of Absalom, and as if that bad man had been the kindest, truest, most dutiful of sons, broke out into this terrible and touching cry: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" are grand and touching. Yet to the compassion that wept over the guilty city, saying: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but thou wouldest not—now is thy house left unto thee desolate;" to the friendship which groaned at the grave of Lazarus; to the kindness which restored her only son to a widowed mother at the gate of Nain; to the mercy that shielded a poor trembling outcast, prostrate and penitent, in Simon's house; above all, to the forgiveness that prayed for murderers, and the love that bled on Calvary,—these are as the shallow waters of a rocky pool to the great ocean which has filled it with the spray of one of its breaking waves.

Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord? The perfect model of love to God, He also is the perfect model of love to man, who, rising above the old terms of the law, taking a higher flight, says, not "Love your neighbor as yourselves," but "Love one another even as I have loved you!"

It is true that with the sun shining we feel no

need for those lesser orbs that lose their lustre in his overwhelming brightness. But it is not true that with a perfect model of every virtue and grace in Jesus Christ we have no need of any other. Children must creep before they walk: and on such as are only yet able to make feeble efforts in the direction of what is good, the very fact that Christ presents not merely a high, but a perfect model, may have somewhat of a depressing and deterring influence. To live like Him seems a hopeless task. What David said of knowledge, we are ready to say of such an attainment, It is too high for me—I need not attempt it. Who shall imitate the inimitable—the God-man who walked aloft and alone, leaving all who have attempted to follow Him, the greatest saints, far below, lagging far behind? Greatly superior to us as Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Paul appear, they resemble those lofty mountains to whose tops, though raised high above the level plain and piercing the clouds with their glistening snows, a brave cragsman may climb; but Jesus, occupying a higher region, seems like the star that shines above them—which, though we should mount up on eagle's wings, it would be impossible to reach. It is not impossible. We are assured that when we shall see Him, we shall be like Him as He is. Yet there are times of defeat, there are periods of spiritual depression, there are moods such as Peter's when he cried: "Depart from me, O Lord, for thou art a righteous man;" when one, who might otherwise give up in despair, will attempt the imitation of an imperfect model, and find in its very imperfections encouragement to persevere.

Besides, while Jesus was, in a sense, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and while his life does certainly illustrate the grand principles of our duty both toward God and man, the saints are very valuable as models, since they teach us how to act in circumstances in which our Lord was never placed, but we often are. Though bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and as such having a fellow-feeling with all our infirmities, He was not a fallen man as we are, and the saints were. Animated by the same passions, placed in the same relationships, and called to endure the same trials as ourselves, their footprints teach us where to walk, and their triumphs how to conquer; their failings, into what sins we may fall; and their graces, to what attainments we should aspire. We look on Jesus, nor can hope to be altogether such as He was, till death's strong hand break the mould of clay, and we are brought forth, to the admiration and joy of angels, a perfect image of our Lord and Master. But in the faith of Abraham and the chastity of Joseph, the meekness of Moses and the patience of Job, the piety of David and the fidelity of Daniel, the zeal of Paul and the love of John, we see what attainments others have reached, to what heights of grace we ourselves may aspire.

God's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear; and there is no reason in the world, therefore, why, in any one heavenly grace we should stand second to these saints; why we should not be as good as they were. Indeed, since we live in happier circumstances than many of them did, walk

brighter light, and enjoy a fuller revelation of the love of God in Jesus Christ, and a fuller dispensation of the Holy Spirit, I know of no reason why men of this age should not be better than they were, and climb to heights of grace the patriarchs never trod. There is a story told of a king of Israel who stood by Elisha's death-bed, weeping and crying: "O, my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" The dying prophet made him take arrows, and smite on the ground. He smote but thrice, and stayed; and the man of God was wroth with him, and said: "Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it." Like him, we lose much by not hoping for more, praying for more, and attempting more.

What we at any rate may, and should therefore strive to attain, we read in the lives of these grand Scripture characters. Nor is it in the nature of things for a renewed man to contemplate without admiring, or to admire without desiring to resemble them. Such desires give birth to efforts, and every such effort in this holy as in other arts, is a step to success. It is here, as in the acquisition of a language or of a science, of a trade or of a profession—present failures lay the foundation of future triumphs. Certainly there is nothing either in our failures, or in the loftiest attainments of such men as Abraham, Moses, or David, to discourage us. The course to which God calls the humblest Christian is one grander than they attained—a career the grandest imagination can fancy. Should we reach their height, far above us as now they seem, we are to be thankful, but not to rest. We

have not yet attained, nor are already perfect. There are heights beyond, above—that, where Jesus stands kindly watching our progress and calling down to us, as, often on our knees, we climb the steep ascent, “Come ye up hither.” So leaving Abraham binding his son on the altar; Job, as, sitting amid the ruins of all his fortune and the graves of all his children, he says: “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord;” David, descending from a throne to tune his harp and fill a royal palace with sacred melodies; Daniel on his knees with a window thrown open to Jerusalem, within eyesight of malignant spies and earshot of the lions that roar ravening for their prey; Elijah on Mount Carmel, with his back to the altar of God and his face to a hostile world,—among the faithless, faithful only he;—leaving these grand spectacles below, we are to toil upwards to Jesus. Forgetting the things which are behind, let us press forward to the mark of the prize of our high calling in Jesus Christ. The goal is this: “Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

To address myself now to the direct purpose of this book. In Abraham I begin my sketches with one who, save our first father Adam, is in some respects the most remarkable man, the greatest character, in history. Not the mighty Nimrods, nor Pharaohs, nor Alexanders, nor Cæsars, nor any other man, has left such a broad mark on the world—though he had no home on its surface but a tent, nor property in its soil but a tomb. His name is known where the greatest emperors and

conquerors were never so much as heard of. There is no quarter of the globe to which it has not been carried ; and it is the only one which is venerated alike by Jews, and Christians, and Mahometans. For, whatever be their differences and jealousies, all of them, in one sense or another, claim an equal relationship with this distinguished patriarch, saying : " We have Abraham for our father ! " Other men, of great statesmanship, or military powers, have founded nations ; but since the days of Creation, or of the Deluge, he is the only man who was the father of a nation, the fountain from which a whole people sprang ! The oldest of our families are but of yesterday compared with his. And as no house in the world is so ancient, to none has the world owed so much as to his. Through him the Saviour came. To his descendants God committed those great truths which have overthrown the most ancient idolatries, have tamed the wildest savage, have emancipated the slave, have raised prostrate humanity, have dried up its bitterest tears and redressed its greatest wrongs, and are destined to overturn Satan's empire throughout the whole bounds of earth, and establish on its ruins the reign of a holy and universal peace—restoring Eden to a defiled and distracted world, and, as in the days of primeval innocence, to humanity the image of its God.

The biographer of any distinguished man considers himself fortunate if he can present his readers in the frontispiece with a likeness of his subject. We are fortunate enough to possess one of Abraham ; and in it a likeness more to be depended on than those of the Pharaohs the Egyptians have

left us carved on their tombs, or the marble busts of the Cæsars that adorn the galleries of Rome. We have pictures of Jesus, of his mother, and of his Apostles, before which Popish devotees are wont to kneel and worship. Like a coarse daub of the Virgin which I saw hung above an altar in Brittany, with an inscription bearing that it was the work of St. Luke's own hand, all these are impudent forgeries—lies through which Rome at once imposes on the credulity, and raises money from the superstition, of her followers. Our likeness of Abraham is a genuine one; he indeed being the only Scripture character, or rather the only character in all ancient history, of whose portrait so much can be affirmed. We have it not in any antique sculpture or painting, but in a form more true and faithful. He lives in the well-known and characteristic features of his descendants.

Types of Christ's blood-bought Church, his race have suffered, and also survived, the changes of four thousand years—the saying that described their early being equally applicable to their later history: this namely, "The more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew." With a tenacity of life unexampled in the history of any other people, and which proves them to have been God's peculiar care, nor Babylonian, nor Assyrian, nor Grecian, nor Roman, nor long centuries of Christian oppression has been able to destroy, or even to absorb them. Clinging as tenaciously to each other as to their faith, they have lived, wedded, died, buried among themselves; mingling as little with other nations as oil with the water amid which it floats. We, for example,

are a mixed race ; so mixed that the blood of Britons, Romans, Saxons, Danes, Norwegians, meets and mingles in our veins. Not so the Jews. It is nigh four thousand years since Isaac and Ishmael met to lay their father in his rocky tomb, yet the blood of Abraham flows as pure in the veins of his Hebrew children as when it first sprang from its source. This is plain from the very remarkable similarity they bear to each other—a resemblance so remarkable, that whether he is an old clothes-man or a courtier, a distinguished singer or a dirty beggar, one who pants under an Indian sun, or wraps his shivering form in arctic furs, walks on 'Change a prince of merchants, or keeps a booth in the foul purlieus of London, or the still fouler Ghetto of Rome, there is no mistaking an Israelite. His features, if not his speech, bewray him. Not only so, but we recognize these features in the world's old paintings, those which represent the manners of ancient Egypt, and the events of time—not far remote from Abraham's own day—when Pharaoh, to use the words of Scripture, “made the children of Israel to serve with rigor, and made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick.”

In all ages the Jews have been, and in all countries are still, so like each other, that we may safely infer that their original was like them. It is impossible to account for this identity of features otherwise than that they bear their father's image ; that Abraham's features are repeated and multiplied in theirs. Any person, as I know from experience, by observing the remarkable resemblance among all the copies of some famous statue—the Apollo

Belvidere for instance, or Venus de Medici, is able to form, before seeing it, a very correct conception of the original. Even so, since with a few exceptions, all Abraham's descendants, ancient and modern, in this and every other country, bear quite a remarkable resemblance to one another, we may certainly conclude that in the Jew we have a faithful portrait and a living likeness of his great progenitor.

This speculation may not seem very complimentary to the patriarch ; associated in our minds as the Jewish features are with the selfishness, and insatiable avarice, and low cunning for which his descendants have been for ages a hissing and a by-word. These have begotten prejudices against their type of features as strong almost as those felt by many against the negro and colored races—of which I could not give a more striking illustration than is to be found in the paintings of the old masters. It is a remarkable fact that though our blessed Lord was a Jew, they never give Him the features of his race ; but, as if they sought thereby to increase our horror of their crimes, reserve these for Iscariot who betrays Him, and for the priests, who eye the Man of Sorrows with scowling and malignant looks. Yet this is a mere prejudice ; and, like that felt against the colored races, is due, as it becomes us to recollect, to circumstances more discreditable to Christians than to Jews, to those who feel the prejudices than to those who suffer from them. The case of the Jews, in fact, is in many respects parallel to that of the negro races. Robbed for long centuries of their rights as men, regarded with

undisguised aversion, treated with every possible indignity, and everywhere most cruelly oppressed, what is bad in their character has been the inevitable result of circumstances, in which others, not their own choice, placed them; and for such as made either them or the negroes what they now are, to abuse and despise them for being so is to add insult to injury, and to cruelty the grossest injustice. Like their countryman in the parable, they have fallen among thieves; and such as cherish the prejudices with which they have been long regarded, resemble more the priest and Levite that passed on the other side than that good Samaritan who took compassion on the bleeding wretch, and poured wine and oil into his cruel wounds. Where the Jews have got a fair chance, they who have kept separate have exhibited another property of oil—they have risen to the top. Brought under Christian influences, they who retain the features of the patriarch's face have exhibited some of the noblest features of his character; by the one as much as by the other proving their honorable lineage, and their right to say, "We have Abraham for our father!"

It may be noticed as a curious and interesting fact, that while Abraham is seen to this day in the features which characterize Jewish men, the very remarkable beauty of his wife often presents and repeats itself in Jewish women. Beauty, no doubt, is always a fading charm, and to its envied possessor, in many cases, a fatal one. Yet it is a good gift of God; and, whether found in human beings, or in the plumes of a bird, the colors of a flower, or the glowing tints of an evening sky, is a source of

innocent pleasure; nor can it be wrong to notice that which men inspired of the Holy Ghost not unfrequently mention. They tell us, for instance, that "Rachel was beautiful," and that "Esther was fair and beautiful." They celebrate the charms of Abigail; and not confining their remarks to female beauty, they tell us that he whose appearance won the hearts of the maids of Israel, and whose brave battle with the giant formed the burden of their songs, "was of a beautiful countenance."

What David gave to Absalom, his guilty and unhappy son, he probably inherited from his own mother. Any way, it is plain from Scripture that while some races are almost hideous from their ugliness—one of the fruits of sin—the Jewish women were remarkable for their personal charms; and indeed it is alleged that some of the finest specimens of female beauty are still found among them. This is more than a curious fact. It forms one of those indirect proofs of the truth and divinity of the Bible, which, though indirect, are not the less but the more valuable. The fountain corresponds with the stream: the ancient record with present physiological facts. For it would appear from the Bible that Sarah, the mother of those lovely women, was perhaps the greatest beauty the painter's art has preserved, or poets have sung. Her charms were so remarkable that they dazzled the eyes of Egypt; and so enduring, that at an age whose wrinkles and gray hairs make other women venerable, she retained all the bloom and loveliness of youth.

Water, whether it springs on the shore or bubbles in the mountain well, where the eagle dresses her

plumes and the red deer slake their thirst, never rises higher than its fountain : and if, in like manner, children's mental powers form a standard whereby to judge of their parents', we must believe Abraham, judging from his descendants, to have been in mind, as well as in piety, one of the greatest of men. Take, for instance, a skull of each of the different races of mankind, and placing them at random on a table before an anatomist, ask him to select that which indicates the highest mental capacity. Without knowing anything whatever of their history, from what graves they were obtained, or to what branches of the human family they belonged, he lays his hand at once on the skull of the Jew. This, take it for all in all, is the best on the table. Vastly superior to those of the aborigines of Australia and ancient Peruvians, that, though separated by a great gulf from the animal creation, stand at the bottom of the human scale, it is visibly superior to the skulls of those Greeks and Romans that in ancient, and also of those Teutonic races that in modern, times have marched at the head of civilization, and seem destined to rule the world. The star of Abraham is in the ascendant here. However morally debased, the Jew stands pre-eminent for his mental powers, and has retained his superiority in circumstances which have degraded other nations almost to the level of beasts. Amid the fire that has burned for ages, this bush remains unconsumed. Here, then, is a race which, after suffering oppressions and degradations sufficient to crush the very soul out of them, is mentally second to none, perhaps superior to any. This is a remarkable fact. It proves what

the Bible leads us to believe, that a special Providence watches over the outcasts of Israel, preserving them for some great end. And it proves more—this namely, that Abraham, “the hole of the pit out of which they were dug, the rock out of which they were hewn,” their great progenitor, was no common man; but one who stood, as well in point of mental ability as of faith and piety, “head and shoulders” above the mass of men.

This may correct some erroneous notions, which many, misunderstanding the language of Scripture, entertain regarding the government of God. He had a great work to do on the earth, and in Abraham He selected a great man to do it: an instrument eminently adapted to accomplish his end. This is, so to speak, God’s ordinary rule. Anything else is exceptional. Having great ends to accomplish, did He not in old times select great men to do them in the cases of Moses, of Joshua, of David, of Daniel, of Paul; and in later times in the cases of Luther and Bishop Latimer, of Calvin and John Knox? Apart altogether from their piety, these all were men of pre-eminent natural abilities. They were the foremost of their time. No doubt God can work by many or by few: smite a giant with a pebble from a stripling’s sling, or scatter a host by the flashes of a lamp and the blare of an empty trumpet; and for the very purpose of reminding men that though Paul plant and Apollos water, the increase is with Him, in saving souls as well as in ruling the destinies of the world, He occasionally selects the weakest instruments to accomplish the greatest ends. But such is not God’s ordinary practice. They altogether misread,

or misunderstand, his Word who think otherwise. How much such ideas are due to men's greedy selfishness or their supineness, I will not undertake to say. But it is not true that any one will do for God's work ; and that, while great sacrifices are to be made for secular objects, and the most brilliant talents secured for secular offices, the service of the King of kings, the offices of the sanctuary, the pulpit, the missionary field, the Sabbath-school, may be left to pious weakness. Such an idea compliments God's power at the expense of his wisdom—it being the part of Divine as well as of human wisdom to select the means best fitted for the end in view.

Before proceeding to the grand moral and religious features of the patriarch's character, I would draw an inference of considerable practical importance from the case of Abraham, and of almost all those men who have left a broad mark on their own and on future ages. These cases prove that God ordinarily works out his purpose by means, and not by miracles—not aside from, but according to, the regular course of nature. Therefore should his Church seek to enlist the highest genius on her side. Her duty is to remove, in the position or poverty of such as minister at her altars, those obstacles which unquestionably deter many entering who would adorn her pulpits, and prove of the highest service to the cause of Christ. To win souls and advance his cause in an indifferent and hostile world, let Hannahs give their Samuels, and Jesses their Davids. And acting with the wisdom of Saul, who, whenever he found a valiant man, took him into his service, let the Church, on

finding talents associated with piety, take them into her service—enlist them in the sacred cause of Him who crowns all his other claims on us with this, He spared not his own Son to save us.

ABRAHAM'S CALL.

The history of infidelity, were it written, would present a succession of ignominious defeats ; defeats due not to any want of ability in those who have assailed the truth, but to this, that its defenders have driven them out of all their positions. The history, the morality, the theology, the consistency, the authenticity, and genuineness of the Bible, the truth of its prophecies and the very possibility of its miracles, have been all attacked—each in its turn, and with the same result. We have seen the soldier return from the fields of war with scars as well as medals on his breast ; but our religion has come out of a thousand fights unscarred, from a thousand fires unscathed. She bears no more evidence of the assaults she has sustained than the air of the swords that have cloven it, or the sea of the keels which have ploughed its foaming waves ; than some bold rocky headland of the billows that, dashing against it in proud but impotent fury, have shivered themselves on its sides. With few exceptions the writings of infidels have sunk into entire oblivion. Their names, and those of their authors, are alike forgotten. Not so the name of Jesus, of Him Voltaire boasted he would crush ; not so the Word of God—the blessed book which is the world's most precious treasure, and often man's only solace, as well in palaces as in cabins. While the works of

once famous sceptics are left to rot on bookshelves, where the moth devours their memory and the spider wraps them in her web, every year sees the Bible translated into some new tongue, acquire a greater influence, and receive a wider circulation. Fulfilling its own glorious predictions, it is bringing nearer the appointed time when, rising over all opposition like a flowing and resistless tide, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters the channel of the deep.

One wonders how the men who now assail our faith can hope for success where Hobbes and Bolingbroke, Voltaire and Rousseau, David Hume and Gibbon, giants in genius and in intellect, totally failed. Christians, possessing their souls in patience and peace, may calmly contemplate the puny assaults of modern infidelity. There is little in these to fill our camp with alarm, or make its Elis tremble for the ark of God. Assailing the faith from new ground, infidelity undertakes to prove the Bible false from its alleged discrepancy with the phenomena of Nature and the discoveries of science. But a few years, we doubt not, will show that though she has changed her ground, she has not changed her doom. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision. Science may, as science has already done, guide us to a sounder understanding of some things in the Word of God. While she corrects any mistake into which the interpreters of Scripture have fallen, there is nothing to dread. Why do the heathen rage? The only result of using the facts of science to undermine the foundations of religion, will resemble that wrought by some angry

torrent when, sweeping away soil and sand and rubbish, it lays bare, and thereby makes more plain, the solid rock on which the house stands, unmoved and unmoveable.

The man who attempts to build a pyramid on its apex would not act more absurdly than some modern philosophers—so called. They base the most extravagant theories on grounds utterly inadequate to support the ponderous superstructure. Propounding doctrines concerning our origin opposed to the Bible, and destructive of our dearest hopes, they ask us to embrace them on grounds such as no judge and jury would attach the least weight to in a court of law. On grounds so feeble and puerile, and in plain opposition to the facts related in the opening pages of the Scriptures, they assert that our origin was in a monkey, or rather in a *monad*. Believe them, and man reached his present condition by a process of development which required millions of years ere it carried him up through the stages of insect, fish, reptile, bird, and beast, to the supremacy he enjoys, the height he now stands on. Others, not prepared to commit themselves to such extravagant vagaries, but animated with a spirit of equal hostility to the Christian faith, assert on grounds equally weak, if not equally ludicrous, that though our first appearance was not in the form of a monad, an oyster, or a monkey, it was in the form of a savage. Believe them, and man's primeval state was not one from which he fell, but from which he rose—one, in fact, of lowest savagedom. And, however widely these opinions differ, if either of them be true, farewell to

our fondest hopes, and our faith in Scripture as the Word of God.

In regard to the latter of these views—for the first we may pass by as the ravings of philosophy run mad—it is opposed to the oldest and universal traditions of the world. These afford abundant evidence that the history of man does not present a being rising from a lower to a higher condition ; but the reverse. Examine the legends of the rudest tribes ; and they will be found to contain memories, though misty, of a past but higher and nobler state of being—of arts, of accomplishments, of a refinement of manners, and of, in many instances, a purity of morals which only exist among them now in tales and songs. Not tradition only, but all history besides, proves that man, left to his own resources, has not risen but invariably sunk in the scale. The bias to this, which we explain by the Fall, may have been corrected in certain instances by providential and preternatural causes. But who examines the records of nations will find that the tendency of morals has always been to become more corrupt, and the tendency of religions to become more idolatrous and impure. They exhibit a constantly increasing departure from the truth. In proof of this I appeal to the history, among extinct nations, of Greece and Rome ; and, among existing ones, of India and China. Trace their morals and religion upwards, and as we advance nearer to their source, we find the one becoming less impure, and the other less untrue, until a period is reached when the resemblance between these and the morals and religious belief of the patriarchs is striking, is indeed quite remarkable.

It is like ascending a river whose waters are polluted by the towns and manufactories that have sprung up on its banks—the nearer we approach the green hills where it springs from its fountains, the purer runs the stream. Man, unaided and left to his own resources, has never risen from a lower to a higher state. On the contrary, we find the vices which early ages discountenanced and forbade, becoming not only universally practised, but even shamefully deified; and the one God of man's first pure faith multiplied into hundreds, in some cases into thousands, and in a few even into millions, of inferior and usually immoral divinities.

These remarks, which are not inapplicable to the present times, and which may help to reassure the hearts of some seized with unnecessary alarm, have been suggested by the fact that Abraham's immediate ancestors were idolaters. What a rapid declension this! and what a remarkable illustration of man's tendency to sink rather than to rise in the scale of moral and intellectual being! Almost ere the gray fathers of the flood were dead, ere perhaps the marks of its awful ravages had vanished from the face of the earth, mankind had forgotten its lesson, and begun to worship the creature in place of the Creator. Abraham certainly was the son of an idolater; and, if old Jewish and Mahometan traditions are to be believed, of one who was a maker as well as a worshipper of idols. "Your fathers," said Joshua to the people of Israel, "dwelt on the other side of the flood, even Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor; and they served other gods." Ur of the Chaldees was the home of the patriarch's race; and the religion they

professed was the Sabian—a faith of Eastern birth, and one which presents idolatry in its oldest and least offensive form.

No man becomes at once, and of a sudden, either a fiend or a saint. His descent into a lower, like his ascent to a higher condition, is gradual—always accomplished, though more rapidly in some cases than in others, step by step. Of this the history of idolatry presents a striking instance. Look back on Greece and Rome! There, in Bacchus, and in Venus, and in other divinities, we see how men, as they do still in India, made gods of the vices which they practised; not only glorying in their shame, but throwing the halo of religion around the grossest immoralities. But mankind had not sunk so low as this, nor become worshippers of stocks and stones, of birds, beasts, and creeping things, in the days of Abraham. That Sabian faith in which he was born, and which his fathers followed, and which still lingers on earth among the Parsees of Bombay, was the least gross of all idolatries; the one into which man first fell, and was most prone to fall. The idolatry of this religion began with the worship, not of false gods, but of Jehovah, the one, living, and true God—under the symbols of the heavenly host. That, man's first declension, and downward step, was one to warn us; but not much to wonder at. **E**ven in these last days, with God's Word in our hands, amid the full blaze of Gospel light, we find it difficult to walk by faith and not by sight; and the corruptions which Popery has engrafted on Christianity, the eyes of her devotees turned on cross and crucifix, the walls of her churches crowded with

images, prove how prone man is to lapse into a sensuous religion, and to seek by means of some visible object to fix his wandering thoughts and inflame his cold devotions. For this purpose the sun, moon, and stars—especially the first of these—were chosen as images, visible symbols of the invisible God. It was in this character that the sun at least in the first instance, was worshipped. And certainly if God was to be adored through symbols, none could be found so appropriate as that imperial luminary, the ruler of the seasons, the source of all light and heat, the very life of nature, which, clothing the forests anew each year with leaves, the pastures with grass, and the fields with corn, resumes his daily course with unabating vigor, shows no sign of growth or of decay, and throned in heaven, shines down from its azure heights with resplendent, dazzling glory.

This, the earliest, was certainly the least gross of all idolatries. But that soon befell it which has happened to the images of the Roman Catholic and the pictures of the Greek Church. The sign came to usurp the place of the thing signified. Ere long it was not the Being symbolized, but the symbol itself, that was regarded as an object of adoration. And now, when the Church of Christ has her course to steer between Rationalism on this hand and Ritualism on that, let not the Bible only, but the history also of this earliest and least gross idolatry, warn her against setting much store on symbols, or leaning towards a sensuous worship. The tendency of every such worship is to become more sensuous; to depart further and further from the simplicity of the Gospel.

It was out of the Sabian religion, as well as out of Ur of the Chaldees, that Abraham was called. The Jews, and the Mahometans also, have curious legends about his conversion and the sufferings he had to endure for the truth. They say that, when he was, according to some, fourteen, according to others, forty years of age, his mind took a religious turn. At this time, observing a star when night overshadowed him, he said, "This is my Lord!" but, keeping his eye on the luminary, and observing it sink ere long, he abandoned all faith in it, wisely remarking, "I like not gods which set." As the night wore on and left him in painful perplexity, the moon rose up in silver splendor. He turned to her, with the delighted exclamation, "This is my Lord!" But following in the wake of the star, she also set; and when her bright rim dipped below the horizon, with her set his faith in her divinity. By-and-by, from the purple east, the sun leapt up, illuminating the heavens with splendor and bathing the world in light. All his dark doubts now scattered with the morning mists before its beams. "This," exclaimed Abraham, throwing himself down to worship, "This is my Lord!" But when hours had rolled on, the sun also began to sink; and when, following star and moon, it vanished from his gaze, old legends tell how Abraham rose from his knees to cast aside the faith of his fathers, and worship Him who alone rules both in heaven and in earth.

Nor is this all these old legends tell us concerning Abraham on his being converted from idolatry. He is said to have taken advantage of the absence of his people to enter their temple, and, sparing

only the biggest of their idols, break all the rest in pieces. Discovering, on their return, the havoc which had been wrought, the people were roused to frenzy. They cried, Who hath done this to our gods? and on being told that it was Abraham, they exclaimed, Bring him forth! Hast thou done this to our gods? they said. Nay, replied he in mockery, Nay, the biggest of them hath done it, but ask them! Thou knowest, was their answer, that these speak not. Abraham now had them in a corner. To this very point he had wished to lead them. So, turning on them, he demanded, Do ye then worship, besides God, that which cannot profit and cannot hurt you? fie on you! Burn him! burst from the lips of these early persecutors, these fathers of the Inquisition. And the old legends go on to tell how a fiery furnace was forthwith kindled; and how this bold witness for the truth was cast among the roaring flames; and how he came forth unhurt—God having spoken out of heaven saying, O Fire, be thou cold, and a prevention unto my servant Abraham!

The Bible is silent as to the manner, and means, and time, of Abraham's conversion. But, whatever these might be, the work was divine—wrought in his heart by Him who gave his servant grace to rise at another call, and go forth, he knew not whither; an exile from his native land, to wander in a land of strangers. Let it be remarked that in whatever manner he was called and converted, his case presents a remarkable example of the sovereignty of divine grace. We are to remember that the true religion was not altogether extinct in Abraham's day. Like stars shining, one here and

another there, through the clefts and openings of a cloudy sky, like those Alpine summits whose snows I have seen glowing in rosy sunlight when all the valleys lay wrapped in the sombre shades of evening, there were families at that time of general idolatry where God was worshipped, not only in spirit, but in truth. Such was Job's, for instance. It is highly probable that he lived about the same period as Abraham. There is no allusion to be found in the Book which bears his name to any of those remarkable events which distinguished the exodus of Israel ; and we may therefore conclude that his era was not coeval with that of Moses, but preceded it. But there are plain allusions in that Book to the Sabian worship, to the adoration of the heavenly bodies ; and this makes it highly probable that Job lived about Abraham's time, and among those whose religion corresponded with that of his compatriots. While that is highly probable, this is certain, that Melchizedec, whom Abraham met, and to whom he paid tithes, was a worshipper of the true God ; and that those among whom this mysterious personage filled the office of a priest, must have been so likewise. Yet, passing by these, God repairs to a family of idolaters, and out of them selects a man to be the father of his people, and the great progenitor of his incarnate Son. Verily his thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways. His grace is free, as the wind that bloweth where it listeth ; and here, as in many other cases of conversion which present most unlooked-for results, we see that " the first are last and the last are first." Abraham is a childless man, and God chooses him to be the father of a

mighty nation ; Abraham is an idolater, and God appoints him conservator of true religion and the ancestor of the world's Redeemer. By this early, as by many other signal acts of free, sovereign, and almighty grace, how does God teach men never to despond, or to despair ? His way is in the sea and his path in the mighty waters : nor can we know what purposes he intends to serve by us : what usefulness may be ours ; what honors may await us ; to what blessings and blessed work we may be called. " He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord !"

ABRAHAM'S TEMPER OR DISPOSITION.

In this aspect of his character Abraham was more like Jesus Christ, stood nearer the most illustrious of his descendants than perhaps any man ; than any at least I have seen, or have read of. What a contrast he offers to those sour, selfish, narrow-minded, mean, greedy, grasping, ill-tempered, or ill-conditioned Christians who present religion in a repulsive rather than in an attractive aspect, ever reminding us of the saying, *The grace of God can dwell where neither you nor I could !*

Where, for example, shall we find such a pattern of Courteousness as Abraham offers for our imitation ? It is the noon-tide hour, when, in hot southern lands, labor, which begins with the first blush of dawn, takes a pause and breathing-time.

Abraham sits in his tent-door enjoying its grateful shade, and looking out on the plain of Mamre, from which the sun's fiery beams have driven men, bird, and panting beasts to such shelter as rocks, and trees, and tents afford. He descries three men approaching; making for his tent, toiling along under the broiling heat. Strangers, neither clansmen, nor neighbors, nor friends, they have no claim on him. He may wait their approach, leaving them to solicit his hospitality. Not he. Abraham rises, nay, he runs to meet them; and mingling respect with kindness, courtly manners with the most benevolent intentions, he bows himself to the ground. Not one who says, *The favor which is worth the giving is worth the asking*, he anticipates their request, and makes offer of his hospitality. But they may fear being burdensome to him. So, to remove any reluctance on their part to accept his kindness, he makes light of it—speaking of what he was about to offer as no tax on his generosity, as but “a morsel of bread.” Nor is this all. With that delicate regard to others' feelings which true kindness prompts, he would make it appear that they will oblige him more by accepting, than he does them by offering, his hospitality. “My Lord,” he says, addressing him who appeared the chief man of the three, “My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant; let a little water be fetched and wash your feet; and rest yourselves under the tree; and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts—after that ye shall pass on.” And in a short while—for Sarah and the servants are hastily summoned

from their different occupations to supply the wants of the strangers—the three are seated at an ample board, Abraham giving the finishing touch to his courtesy by respectfully standing beside his guests while they eat. Throughout the whole transaction, he presents a beautiful model of what was once understood by that excellent, though now much misapplied term, “a gentleman.” This is what every Christian should be. Modern use has greatly perverted the words *gentleman* and *gentlewoman* from their original and excellent meaning. What they indicate cannot be conveyed by a patent of nobility. It belongs to no rank. It is the ornament of the highest, and should be the ambition of the humblest. The temper and manners these terms express are compressed into this one brief exhortation of the Apostle, “Be courteous.” Courteousness is a Christian duty; and nowhere can a better example of it be found than in this story—the eight verses of Genesis which relate it containing a better lesson on true politeness than the whole volume of “Lord Chesterfield’s Letters to his Son.”

Abraham’s Generosity, a still higher virtue, is equally remarkable. In proof of that, look to the manner in which he treated Lot, his nephew. Early deprived of a parent’s care, fatherless, if not also motherless, Lot is, I may say, adopted by Abraham—received into his nest, taken under his sheltering wing. Not so unhappy as some who have had no other return for such kindness as he rendered Lot than the basest, blackest ingratitude, whose lives have been embittered and their bosoms stung by those they had kindly nursed still Abra

ham's connection with Lot cost him much care and trouble. Quarrels arose between their servants, and matters at length came to this pass—that they must part. Now, there can be no doubt that Lot lay under the strongest obligations to Abraham. It was his part to accept his uncle's judgment in this juncture, and leave to his decision their separate paths in life. The patriarch had been a father to him—a friend kinder than many fathers. Besides, Abraham was the elder of the two, and also the greater of the two: more than that, the land of Canaan, which was Lot's only by sufferance, was his by promise. Abraham might have said to Lot, "You have no right whatever to this land, to a foot of it; go in peace, but seek your portion elsewhere. Such is my decision; and, remember, I have power to enforce it." Yet the uncle generously bestows on the nephew a share of his own property; more than that, as if he were the younger and also the weaker of the two, as if the land of Canaan had been promised to the other rather than to him, as if he had been the party who had received rather than conferred favors, in determining their respective positions Abraham leaves the choice to Lot. He will take Lot's leavings. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee," says this right noble man, "between me and thee. We be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? If thou wilt take the left hand, I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, I will go to the left." What self-denial, self-control, self-sacrifice, in that speech! What liberal and magnanimous generosity his! What a model of a Christian this man!

Men often do wrong by insisting on their rights.

Far be that from Abraham. He seeks not his own, but the things of others; and here offers one of the costliest sacrifices ever laid on the altar of peace. This sacrifice, be it remarked and remembered, did not go without its reward. Abraham found it; as, I cannot doubt, he very sensibly and very gratefully felt on that eventful morning when, standing on Bethel's rocky heights, he turned his gaze from the plain—Lot's choice—all smoking like a burning furnace, to the green hills around dotted with his flocks, to his herds safely browsing on the dewy pastures, and to the tents below, where his family were reposing beneath the shadow of the shield of God—every head laid on its pillow of sweet sleep and peace. Still, as then, let me add, good men will, and shall sooner or later, profit by every sacrifice they make for peace. Let us "seek peace and pursue it."

But never did Abraham, or any one else, present a finer model of disinterested generosity and true nobility of mind than he, amid scenes that usually inflame the worst and most selfish passions of our nature. He stands on a field strewn with the ghastly dead; the air is filled with the shouts of conquerors and the groans of captives; a rich spoil lies scattered at his feet; his cheek is still red with the flush, and his sword with the blood of battle—and his bearing there offers an example of one of those bright gleams which occasionally relieve the horrors and gild the lurid clouds of war. A man of peace, the battle was not of his seeking. But the news had reached his tents that Lot and his family are prisoners. The tidings awaken all his old affections. His trumpet sounds to arms. Lot

must be rescued. With more than three hundred retainers following his banner, he pushes on at their head; overtakes the foe; and, throwing himself on their ranks, achieves a surprise, a rescue, and a signal victory. By the rights of war the spoil, at least the greater part of it, falls to him; and therefore the King of Sodom, content to get back his subjects, and perhaps the captives to boot, says, "Give me the persons and take the goods to thyself." He might have done so. Many would have done so—all, indeed, who, taking advantage of forms of law, and regardless of justice, gratitude, and the claims of others, insist on their legal rights. Not so did Abraham. What a rebuke his conduct administers to such mean and mercenary spirits! What an example his of that high Christian principle that sets humanity and justice above mere legal claims—the law of God, in fact, above the law of man—and scorns to touch what the latter may through its imperfections grant, but a higher law, the golden rule, "As ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them," forbids a man to take. With a single eye to the glory of his God and the just claims of the unfortunate, Abraham gives up his legal rights; and to the King of Sodom returns this magnanimous answer, "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and of earth, that I will not take from a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich." Here is a pattern to copy! Playing as high-minded a part as this grand old patriarch, equally well illustrating the Christian maxim, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever

ye do, do all to the glory of God," how would we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour ?

The Tenderness of Abraham's heart is as remarkable as the loftiness, purity, and sternness of his virtue. Sodom was a sink of iniquity. Abraham could not but know that, and could not but hold the habits of its people in unutterable abhorrence. Yet see how he mourns its doom : regarding its sinners with such pity as filled the eyes of Jesus, and drew from his heart this lamentable cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but thou wouldest not !" There have been men, even women, who went sternly to the work of executing God's judgments—cutting away the foul cancer from the breast of society with unflinching nerves, with an eye that knew no pity and a hand that did not spare. "Blessed above women," sung Deborah, "shall Jael, the wife of Heber, be. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workman's hammer, and with the hammer she struck Sisera, and smote off his head ; and so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord." What a contrast to that strong iron heart the tenderness of Abraham's ! Sodom awakens all his pity. Considerations of its enormous guilt are swallowed up in the contemplation of its impending doom. Truest, tenderest type of his own illustrious Son, with the spirit that dropped in the tears and flowed in the blood of Jesus, he casts himself between God's anger and the guilty city. He asks, he pleads, he prays for mercy—not that the righteous only be saved, but that the wicked be spared for the sake of the righteous. In his anxiety

to save their lives, he imperils his own ; stands in the way ; braves and encounters the danger of turning the Avenger's sword on himself. Once, and again, and again, he puts God's long-suffering patience to the trial. He detains Him ; keeps Him listening to new pleas and requests. Like the gallant crew who, moved by the sight of drowning wretches that hang in the shrouds and stretch out their hands for help, after repeated failures to make the wreck, venture life-boat and lives once more amid the roaring breakers, Abraham cries, " Oh, let not my Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once ; peradventure ten shall be found there ?"

Like some tall mountain whose top catches the beams of the morning sun ere he rises on the lower hills and sleeping homesteads of the winding valleys, this patriarch, as he saw Christ's day, seems to have caught Christ's spirit, afar off. Surely his was the Spirit of Christ—that mind of which it is said, " Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Compassion, pity, love for sinners, than these there is no surer mark and test of true religion. May they be found in us as in Jesus Christ !—as in Abraham !—as in him, perhaps the greatest of all the patriarch's merely human descendants, who, penetrated with compassion for his guilty, unhappy countrymen, wrote, " I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness, that I have great heaviness and sorrow of heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren !"

ABRAHAM'S FAITH AND PIETY.

In a clear wintry night, when planets, constellations, and all the orbs of heaven are sparkling through the frosty air, we see how, as Paul says, "one star differeth from another star in glory." But though some are larger and much more luminous than others, which, now caught, now lost, seem but points of light, not a few appear equally brilliant. Of these rivals that are flaming and wheeling in different quarters of the firmament, it were hard to say which is pre-eminent—the biggest, brightest gem in the dusky crown of night. This difficulty is one we do not meet on opening the Bible at the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews. With examples of faith, extending all the way down from the remote days of Abel to those last times when the saints of God were stoned and sawn asunder, tempted, and slain with the sword, it presents a bright and glorious spectacle. We gaze on that firmament, if I may so speak, which shines above the Church through the long dark night of time; and which, as the night wears on, grows more and more resplendent with those whom God is calling up to shine in heaven as the stars forever and ever. History contains no catalogue of equally illustrious names. It relates no such famous deeds as stand recorded in that grand chapter. But though these stars of the Church resemble those of the material heavens in this, that one differeth from another in glory, they differ in this, on the other hand, that for the power, grandeur, and, in whatever aspect indeed it be regarded, for the greatness of

his faith, the severity of its trial and the brilliancy of its triumphs, Abraham shines pre-eminent. He has no equal, no rival. To change the figure, he holds such pre-eminence among these grand exemplars of trust in God and faith in his unfailing word, as does the centre mountain among the group above whose rocky pinnacles and snow-clad summits it rears its imperial dome.

Compare Abraham with some, or with any one, of the worthies whose names are embalmed in that chapter. Take Moses. Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh? he said. With the rod in his hand that he had already seen changed into a living serpent, and that was hereafter to change rivers into blood and the bed of ocean into dry land, Moses shrank from the dangerous task; he hesitated, conjuring up difficulties and urging objections till the Divine anger was kindled against him. Take Gideon. Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? he cries. Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And saying so, there he stands on the threshing-floor, nor leaves it for a nobler sphere till miracles strengthen and sustain his faith—till a bowlful of water is wrung from the fleece around which all the ground lay dry; and on another morning the fleece lies dry on meadows sparkling with dew, by bushes hung thick with diamonds. And to mention but one other, though not the least of the worthies enrolled in that chapter, take David. See how he staggers beneath his load! Look at him repairing for safety and shelter to the Philistines, as if God had ever given his enemies occasion for the taunt, **Where is now thy God?**

Yet, trusting them rather than Him who had delivered him from the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear, and the hand of the giant champion whom he encountered with no other weapon than sling and pebble, he flies to the country of the Philistines, and throws himself into their arms—distrusting God, and crying, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul!

Look now at Abraham's Faith! It stood the test of much severer trials. He is called to leave his country and his kindred—called to go he knew not where; called to be he knew not what. Nor does he hesitate. He instantly responds; repairs to Canaan; and lives and dies in the confident belief that it shall belong to him and his. Yet he found no place there to rest the sole of his foot—his weary foot—but was tossed about during a long lifetime here and there, like a sea-weed which is floated hither and thither on the wandering billows, cast on the shore by this tide and swept away by that. Looking not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, the life of all believers is more or less one of faith. But of Abraham and his whole life in the land of Canaan, of every journey he undertook, every march he made, and every footprint he left on its soil or on its sands, it might be literally as well as figuratively said, it was true of him in respect of this world as well as of the next, as it never was of any other man, "He walked by faith and not by sight."

This faith culminates on Moriah—the Mount where, laying Isaac on the altar, it endures its greatest trial, and achieves its greatest triumph. It furnishes the only key to the questions that rise

unbidden as we read the story—a fond and doting father, how could Abraham undertake the dreadful task? how was he able to contemplate embruining his hands in the blood of his son? how did his reason withstand the shock? how did his heart not break? how had he nerve to disclose the dreadful truth to Isaac, to kiss him, to bind his naked limbs, to draw the knife from its sheath, and raise his arm for the blow? how did not the cords of life snap under the strain, and Abraham, spared the horrid sacrifice, fall dead on the altar—a pitiful sight, a father clasping within his lifeless arms the beloved form of his son? It is by the power of faith he stands there, the knife glittering in his hand, his arm raised to strike—the conqueror of nature. The blow shall make him childless, yet he believes that he shall be the father of a mighty nation; that when the flames have consumed the loved form at his side, Isaac shall rise from their ashes; and that after this bloody tragedy and greatest act of worship, with Isaac restored to his arms, as they climbed, they shall descend the Mount together. Who can help exclaiming, O Abraham, great is thy faith!

“By faith,” says St. Paul, “Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called—accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.” It is thus he explains the scene on that mysterious and awful Mount where, in the victim unbound and a divinely provided substitute bleeding in his room, Abraham saw Christ’s day afar off, and was glad. Thus the

Apostle, magnifying the power of faith, and showing how to him who believeth all things are possible, teaches us to cry, Lord help mine unbelief! increase my faith! It is certain that in respect of this crowning grace, Abraham offers us the grandest model, presents an all but perfect exemplar. In Paul's catalogue of immortals he shines the star of greatest magnitude; and with a change of sex, to him we may accord this palm, this highest praise, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all!"

Yet the patriarch had his failings—as who has not?—and they are written to warn "him who thinketh he standeth, to take heed lest he fall." If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, how, asks the prophet, canst thou contend with horsemen? Yet, strange to say, though Abraham contended successfully in the race with horsemen, distancing them all, he was outstripped by footmen. He trusted God to restore the life of his son, yet did not trust Him to protect the honor of his wife. Telling a lie about Sarah, he failed in the very grace for which he was most distinguished. Should not these things teach us to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation; and never under any circumstances to forget the warning, "Be not high-minded, but fear"? When Nehemiah, bold as a lion, said, "Shall such a man as I flee?" how much more might we have expected Abraham to say, "Shall such a man as I lie?" His faith failed him. This great and venerable patriarch stands convicted of a mean equivocation. And who that sees him vainly trying to gloss over his shame, can help exclaiming, Lord,

what is man? Surely the best and worst of men have but one refuge—the blood and righteousness of Jesus.

Another practical and equally important remark we may draw from Abraham's history, ere he leaves the stage to give place to his servant—whom we shall next introduce. Paul explains the patriarch's pre-eminent triumph by his pre-eminent faith. But what explains it? What fed the faith wherein his great strength lay? Challenging comparison with any, and excelling all, in that grace, we may justly apply to him the glowing terms and bold figures of the prophet—"He was a cedar in Lebanon, with high stature and fair branches, and shadowing shroud—the cedars of God could not hide him—the fir-trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut-trees were not like his branches, nor was any tree in the garden of God like unto him for beauty: his root," he adds, explaining how this cedar towered above the loftiest trees, giant monarch of the forest, "his root was by the great waters." And what that root found in streams which, fed by the snows and seaming the sides of Lebanon, hottest summers never dried and coldest winters never froze, the unequalled faith of Abraham found in close and constant communion with God. Like Enoch, he walked with God. Each important transaction of life was entered on in a pious spirit, and hallowed by religious exercises. His tent was a moving temple. His household was a pilgrim church. Wherever he rested, whether by the venerable oak of Mamre, or on the olive slopes of Hebron, or on the lofty, forest-crowned ridge of Bethel, an altar rose; and

his prayers went up with its smoke to heaven. Such daily, intimate, and loving communion did this grand saint maintain with heaven, that God calls him his "friend;" and honoring his faith with a higher than any earthly title, the Church has crowned him "Father of the Faithful." He lived on terms of fellowship with God, such as had not been seen since the days of Eden. Voices addressed him from the skies; angels paid visits to his tent; and visions of celestial glory hallowed his lowly couch and mingled with his nightly dreams. He was a man of prayer, and therefore he was a man of power. Setting us an example that we should follow his steps,—thus, to revert to language borrowed from the stateliest of Lebanon's cedar, thus was he "fair in his greatness and in the length of his branches, for his root was by the great waters."

Eliezer the Pattern Servant.

THE French have established a *diligence* that starts from the sea-coast at Beyrout, and now climbing the steeps and now winding through the picturesque valleys of Lebanon, descends after a long day's journey on the city of Damascus. This city is a point of interest to every traveller who visits the Holy Land ; nor any wonder, since there are points, not a few, in which it claims pre-eminence over any other place in the world.

Akin to the veneration with which the men of his day regarded Methusaleh, hoar with the snows of nine hundred sixty and nine years ; with which we ourselves should gaze on the oldest living man ; which I felt on looking even on the ruins of a decayed but living yew, that, a sapling at the date of David's battle with Goliah, was a great tree, mantled in the mists or white with the snows of our hills, that winter night the Saviour was born—akin to this is the feeling with which an intelligent and thoughtful traveller must tread the streets of Damascus. Said by Josephus to have been founded by a great-grandson of Noah, and certainly spreading along the banks of Abana at the time Abraham entered the land of Canaan, Damascus is the oldest existing inhabited city of the world. Of all those that were coeval with it, it only stands. **The hand**

of Time, committing its ravages less suddenly but no less surely than the flood that swept away Enoch, the first city, as it did Eden, the first garden in the world, has left no other memorial of these than their names in the page of history, or some desolate and lonely ruin. It is not so with Damascus. Long anterior to the building either of Athens or of Rome it was a busy city; and, sole survivor of a remote antiquity, it is a busy city still. How great its age! It boasts of streets along which the tide of human life has ebbed and flowed for nearly four thousand years. Were the title one which could be properly applied to any place but heaven, not Rome, but Damascus, should be called "The Eternal City."

Singularly interesting to antiquaries on account of its extreme antiquity, this city presents also features of peculiar interest to men engaged in the pursuits of trade; whether they be the arts of peace or war they cultivate. Famous during long ages for its silk manufactures, it gives its own name to a fabric which is esteemed of superior richness and value—*damask* being called so from the circumstance that it was invented in Damascus, and first woven in its looms. Its weapons of steel were even more famous than its webs of silk. Happy the man in battle who carried a Damascus blade; no other place forging swords of such exquisite temper. I know not, but probably the Bible alludes to the superior excellence of these where it says, "Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?" I once happened to see this steel put to the test. It was in France, and in the chemistry class of the Sorbonne. In the course of

a lecture on iron, Thenard, the professor, produced a Damascus blade, stating that he believed that these swords owed their remarkable temper to the iron of which they were made being smelted by the charcoal of a thorn-bush that grew in the desert. To put it to the trial, he placed the sword in the hand of a very powerful man, his assistant ; desiring him to strike it with all his might against a bar of iron. With the arm of a giant the assistant sent the blade flashing around his head, and then down on the iron block, into which, when I expected to see it shivered like glass, it embedded itself, quivering but uninjured ; giving, besides a remarkable proof of the trustworthiness of the sword, new force to the proverb, *True as steel*.

But Damascus, which her poets dignify with the title of "Pearl of the East," presents attractive charms to travellers that have no stake in trade, and feel no interest in antiquarian studies ; for, besides being the oldest, it is in some of its aspects the most beautiful of cities. With its white towers and minarets shooting up through groves of green palms into the transparent air, it lies within sight of the snow-crowned Hermon ; reposing at the feet of a grand mountain range, and encircled by a zone of gardens and of orchards of variously tinted foliage and the finest fruits. Its plain is watered by Abana and Pharpar. These rivers, reckoned by the Syrian leper better than all the waters of Israel, rush forth from their mountain gorges to be parted into a thousand streams, foaming onward in their course, dance and sparkle in bright sunshine, and cover the soil on their banks with a carpet of flowery verdure. No city in the world is more,

perhaps none is so worthy of the encomium which the pride and patriotism of the Jews pronounced on their Jerusalem, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Travellers have used the most glowing terms and exhausted the powers of language in their attempts to describe its charms ; but no expression can give us so vivid an idea of them as the part Mahomet acted, when, a camel driver traversing the neighboring mountains, he stood in the gorge where the city first burst on his view. Rapt for a while in astonishment, he gazed on the wondrous scene, but by-and-by recovered himself ; and fearing, should he venture down into the city, that its charms would seduce him into forgetting the vast schemes of his life, he turned aside, and passed on, saying, with a self-denial and determination of purpose Christians would do well to imitate, *Man can have but one paradise, and mine is fixed above.*

Legends also cling to Damascus and the places around, which invest them with no ordinary interest. The origin and foundation of the city are lost in the mists of ages, but there is a common belief that he who looks on its lovely plain sees the cradle of the human race ; and that it was from its red clay soil that God formed the first man, and also gave him his name of Adam—which is, being interpreted, *red clay*. If this is true, it imparts an air of probability to another of their legends, this, namely, that it was near Damascus that Abel fell a victim to his brother's envy, and his blood went up to heaven for vengeance on earth's first, if not worst, murderer. Here, on one of the mountain heights to the west of the city, is

the place, it is said, where Abraham stood on that eventful day, when, following with anxious eye the setting course of star, and moon, and sun, he abandoned their worship for that of the true God ; and there, down on the plain in yonder vast mound, is the sepulchre of Nimrod—that mighty hunter before the Lord, who, as the founder of Babel, looms so large through the mists of four thousand years, the first of earth's old great monarchs.

These traditions, however interesting, may possibly be mere fancies ; although in a sackful of such legends there are almost always some grains of truth. But though these were ranked with the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," there are facts associated with Damascus which, after Bethlehem and Jerusalem, invest it with greater sacredness than any other spot on earth. It is interesting as the home of Naaman the Syrian ; him who, advised by a captive girl that had compassion on her master, repaired to Israel, and lost both his pride and leprosy in the waters of the Jordan. It is interesting as the city from whose gates the proud armies marched forth, over which God wrought some of his greatest triumphs on behalf of his ancient people ; striking that host of a sudden with blindness, and this with such a panic, that with Benhadad at their head, and two-and-thirty allied princes swelling the rout, they fled like sheep before a handful of the warriors of Israel. It is interesting to the students of Scripture through its association with the two greatest of the prophets. Probably Elijah, but certainly Elisha, walked its streets. God had sent him there : and there he unveiled such a future of crime

and cruelty before Hazael, that, hardened sinner as the soldier was, he started in horror from his own image, exclaiming, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" But what especially makes Damascus interesting and "holy ground" is that it formed the scene of an event which, in its influence on the world, takes rank next to the birth and death of the Son of God. It was nigh to this city the great Apostle of the Gentiles was converted. And what man occupies such a place in sacred history as he; did so much in his lifetime, or has done so much by his writings, to proclaim and propagate the Gospel? This "chief of sinners," as he humbly, penitently called himself, was unquestionably the chief of Apostles; in writings, as in labors and in trials, more abundant than them all. Next to Jesus Christ, whose "name is as ointment poured forth," and than whose there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved, no name on earth, in the homes of the godly, is such a "household word" as Paul's; and in heaven, next to our Redeemer, I can believe him to be regarded with more universal interest than any one else in glory. How many have his pleadings moved; how many hearts have the arrows from his quiver pierced; to how many have his words brought life and comfort; and how many saints strengthened thereby have entered the dark valley singing his own grand song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law: but thanks be to God who giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ"? There, the light shone that paled a noonday sun, and the

darkness fell that issued in quenchless light, and Jesus last visited our world to convert his greatest persecutor into his greatest preacher. For these reasons Damascus will ever be among the sacred places which a Christian would like to visit.

The reputed birthplace of Adam, and certainly the spiritual birthplace of Paul, perhaps the greatest of his sons, this city gave birth to another man, of whom, and of whose remarkable virtues, it has no reason to be ashamed. Domestic servants form a very large, a very useful, and a very important class in society; and it can boast of having given birth to one who occupies a place of as great pre-eminence among them as Paul perhaps did in the Apostleship of the Church. And so, appreciating the higher virtues, however humble the sphere be which they adorn, more than for its beauty of situation, more than for its famous fabrics, more than for its hoar antiquity, I regard Damascus with interest as the birthplace of him whose name stands at the head of this chapter—the steward of Abraham's house, as his own master calls him, "This Eliezer of Damascus."

Consider his position in life.—He was a servant.

He belonged to a class which the Bible highly honors, and by which it should be highly honored in return. Gratitude for the estimation in which it holds those whom many despise, and for the elevation to which it has raised them it found treated as slaves and trodden in the dust, requires that. The oldest, truest, and best of books, this Book, for the rules it supplies for this life and the hopes it presents of a better one, is adapted to all classes of society; and should be equally valued by all. This

was well expressed by two very different, but both impressive, scenes. There, in yonder palace where a royal lady, about to leave our shores and rise in time to the position of a queen, receives a deputation. They have come to offer her, in the name of the women of our country, a parting marriage gift. It is no costly ornament, fashioned of gold and flashing with precious gems—diamonds from Indian mines, or pearls from the deep, such as the wealth and willingness of the donors could have purchased. A healthy sign of the age, and a noble testimony to its religious character, the gift is a copy of the Holy Scriptures—this, as in long centuries hence it will be told, was the marriage gift it was thought worthy of a Christian nation to bestow, and worthy of a royal princess to receive. And there also, on yon stormy shore, where, amid the wreck the night had wrought, and the waves, still thundering as they sullenly retire, had left on the beach, lies the naked form of a drowned sailor boy. He had stripped for one last, brave fight for life; and wears nought but a handkerchief bound round his cold breast. Insensible to pity, and unawed by the presence of death, those who sought the wreck, as vultures swoop down on their prey, rushed on the body, and tore away the handkerchief: tore it open, certain that it held within its folds gold; his little fortune; something very valuable for a man in such an hour to say, I'll sink or swim with it. They were right. But it was not gold. It was the poor lad's Bible—also a parting gift, and the more precious that it was a mother's.

Equally suited for a royal princess and a cabin-

boy, and all indeed upward from the broad base to the apex of the social pyramid, the Bible deserves to be held in higher esteem by no class than by servants. There is none in the world on which it bestows a higher honor; to whom indeed it addresses a call so high and noble—it being to servants, or rather, for such were most of those whom he addressed, to slaves, the Apostle says, “Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour.” He who so orders his life and conversation as to bring no dishonor or reproach on religion, who gives no occasion to its enemies to blaspheme, nor by his falls and inconsistencies furnishes scandals to be told in Gath and published in the streets of Ashkelon, does well. He may thank God that, amid life’s slippery paths he has prayed, nor prayed in vain, “Hold up my goings that my footsteps slip not.” He does better still in whose life religion presents itself, less in a negative and more in a positive form. For, while it is well to depart from evil, it is better to do good; nor does he live in vain who exemplifies by his daily life and conversation the pure, and virtuous, and holy, and beneficent, and sublime, and saving doctrines of God his Saviour. The first is good: the second is better: but the last is best of all. So to live as to be beautiful as well as living epistles of Jesus Christ, seen and read of all men—so to live as to recommend the truth to the admiration and love of others—so to live as to constrain them to say, What a good and blessed thing is true religion!—as in some measure to win the encomium of her, who, looking on Jesus, exclaimed, “Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee

suck!"—so to live, in fact, as to resemble those books which, in addition to their proper contents, are bound in gold, are illuminated, and illustrated with paintings: or those pillars which, while like their plainer neighbors supporting the superstructure, are also its ornaments, rising gracefully from the floor in fluted columns, and crowned with wreaths of flowers,—this is best of all.

A Christian can aspire no higher. And let it be remembered that for a work so sacred Paul singles out servants. It is not kings on their thrones, nor lords in their castles, nor high dignitaries of Church or State, but these, the humble denizens of the kitchen, the sun-browned laborers of the cottage and fields, whom he calls, not merely to exemplify or illustrate, but to *adorn* the doctrine of God their Saviour. Let others respect them; any way, let servants respect themselves. Such honors have not all his saints. Ample compensation this for what the world regards as their humble position—as it were to the lark, could she be dissatisfied with her grassy nest, to think that though no singing bird has such a lowly home, none soar so high as she, or sing so near to the gates of heaven. Eliezer belonged to this class; and is a grand pattern to all servants who are seeking through grace to fulfil their high calling and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour. It will be my aim to set him forth in this light as we proceed. Meanwhile I go on to show that his condition in life was below even that of a servant, as we understand the term. My object in this is not to detract from, but rather add to, our admiration of the man, such a circumstance being calculated to bring out his merits all the

more plainly, as the dark cloud on which they are painted does the colors of a rainbow, or its foil the brilliancy of a precious gem.

Servants, in our sense of the term, are those whose skill, time, and labor are their own property. Disposing of these for a longer or shorter period at their own free will, and as they judge most to their advantage, they belong to themselves; and need call no man master, unless they choose, and as they choose. The few excepted who, having inherited or acquired a fortune, are independent of the gains of labor, there is hardly any class that enjoys such an amount of freedom as domestic servants. Few, on the whole, are so well off: and, did servants sufficiently appreciate the advantages they enjoy under a kind, Christian roof, none have more occasion, from a sense of gratitude to God, so to demean themselves, and discharge the duties of their calling, as to "adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour." With wages adequate to their present, and, unless wasted on vanity, to their prospective wants, found in food and many of the comforts of life, they enjoy freedom from cares that press on the heads of the house, and may sing at their work like birds who have their wants supplied, though they neither sow nor reap. Their business binds down many other classes to one spot, as their roots do the trees to the soil; but servants enjoy a freedom approaching that of the denizens of the air—"The world is all before them, where to choose."

The fisherman is bound to the sea-shore; the shepherd to the lonely hills; the ploughman to the glebe; the merchant to the busy town; lawyers to

the neighborhood of courts ; shopkeepers are nailed to their counters ; pastors have to move, as they should shine, within the orbits of their congregations ; and thousands of our artizans, panting to breathe fresh air and glad their eyes with green fields, have to live amid the smoke of furnaces and the ceaseless roar of machinery. Many are, but many more may be called, slaves to business. So unlike slavery, however, is the condition of our servants, that numbers of them acquire the restless habits of the nomade races, of gypsies or Tartars. They roam from one situation to another, shifting with every shifting term—an abuse of their liberty much to be regretted. Reducing the value of character, and leading to license of life and manners, this habit proves most unfavorable both to their moral and material interests ; presenting in a class in whose welfare all should take a kind and Christian interest, too many illustrations of the proverb—“ *A rolling stone gathers no moss.*”

Eliezer had no such opportunities of abusing liberty. He was not a servant in our sense of the term. As Abraham’s other servants, and indeed almost all servants in those days were, he was a slave—and that such was the true condition of the patriarch’s servants is plainly indicated by what is told us of the three hundred armed followers whom he summoned to his standard on hastening to the rescue of Lot—this, namely, that they “ were born in his own house.” It proves nothing to the contrary that this man, holding a high place in his master’s house, was one whom Abraham trusted with his confidence, whom he employed in important domestic affairs, and whom, indeed, he at one

time probably intended to constitute his heir. It was not an uncommon thing in those days, when slavery was a comparatively mild and gentle servitude, for such as had been bought and sold to rise in the changes of fortune from the bottom to the very top of her wheel. Witness Esther's romantic and splendid history. And to take a case in some respects parallel to that of Eliezer, we know that he did not hold a more respectable and responsible office in the house of Abraham than Joseph held in that of Potiphar. "Behold," he said, in answer to the solicitations of the temptress, "my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in his house than I: neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Still Joseph, this paragon of virtue, the man who has associated his name with the highest recorded example of untarnished purity and truest honor, was a slave; nor is there any reason to suppose that Eliezer occupied in Abraham's household a better position than he did in Potiphar's, who was bought of the Ishmaelites, and, shame to say it, had been bought by them of his own brothers.

We defend no slavery: but abhor all kinds of it, be it domestic, political, ecclesiastical, or spiritual. May God break every yoke! Yet be it observed that while Eliezer was in a condition of servitude, his, that of patriarchal times, was no such servitude as in our days has produced the most revolting cruelties and unutterable crimes. Then, as is manifest to any one who reads the books of Moses, the

system of bondage—not established by God, but only tolerated among his ancient people—had the usual severities of slavery so ameliorated, had the abuses it is liable to so carefully restrained, and had its term in ordinary circumstances so limited, that, to quote it either as a sanction or defence of modern slavery is wickedly to confound things that widely differ. At the same time, I may remark that while God, so to speak, winked at slavery—as at a plurality of wives, and other customs opposed to the spirit of the Gospel—in these early times, we see in the very infancy of the system evidences of its essentially vicious character. Hercules is said to have strangled serpents; but it strangled virtue in its cradle. Among those quiet pastoral scenes where Jacob's sons, steeling their hearts against his cries and entreaties, sell their brother; and in those tented homes, far from the pollution and bare-faced vice of cities, where Sarah, and Leah, and Rachel dispose, as if they were cattle, of the bodies of their handmaids, we see the cropping out of a system which has everywhere blighted, and blasted, and rudely trampled on the freedom of man and the virtue of woman. It has been fully developed since then. Look at it under the most favorable circumstances! Examine the fruits it has borne even in what might be called a Christian soil! See fathers selling their children, and worse still, debauching their own daughters; women tied naked to the whipping-post, and while they writhe under the bloody lash, filling the air and Heaven itself with their agonizing cries; virgin modesty openly scorned; all female virtue and manly respect crushed out of humanity; the black man

degraded into a brute, and the white man changed into a monster? And was not a system which thus, deepening the degradation and aggravating the curse of the Fall, defeated the blessed ends for which God's Son descended on a ruined world, well named by Wesley, *the sum of all villanies*? It was next to blaspheming the name of God for its apologists and abettors—some of them, alas! ministers of the Gospel—to pretend that it had any sanction in the Bible, or speak of Eliezer's gentle, noble, virtuous, generous, and saintly master as that "good old slaveholder, Abraham." Happily there is no temptation now to call sweet bitter, and bitter sweet; good evil, and evil good. We and our brethren in America are done with this great crime; but unhappily neither of us, it would seem, with its consequences, though we paid a heavy penalty, and they a heavier—the stain that dimmed the lustre of their banner-stars not being washed out but in a sea of blood.

In making these remarks, which have been suggested by the case of Eliezer, I freely admit that there were cases, not a few cases perhaps, where ~~the~~ natural results of slavery were much modified, if not altogether neutralized:—cases where masters, deploring the existence of what they did not establish and could not abolish, ruled with a gentle hand; and, holding themselves responsible to God for the duties of their position, won the regards and reigned in the hearts of their slaves. And ruling like Abraham, such men found among that despised and down-trodden race, whom some of our so-called philosophers regard, and it is no breach of charity to believe would, had they the power, treat, as little

better than brutes—examples of affection to their master and of fidelity to their trust not inferior to that of Eliezer of Damascus. Before I proceed to his character, I would give one example, asking those who read it to consider if kindness, sympathy with their circumstances, forbearance with their faults, interest in their welfare, and courteous and Christian treatment, could produce such a noble character out of negro slaves, how many such might they not produce among our domestic servants ?

On the deck of a foundering vessel stood a negro slave. The last man left on board, he was about to step into the life-boat. She was already laden almost to the gunwale, to the water-edge. Bearing in his arms what seemed a heavy bundle, the boat's crew, who with difficulty kept her afloat in the roaring sea, refused to receive him. If he came, it must be unencumbered and alone. On that they insisted. He must either leave that bundle and leap in, or throw it in and stay to perish. Pressing it to his bosom, he opened its folds ; and there, warmly wrapped, lay two little children, whom their father had committed to his care. He kissed them ; and bade the sailors carry his affectionate farewell to his master, telling him how faithfully he had fulfilled his charge. Then lowering the children into the boat, which pushed off, the dark man stood alone on the deck, to go down with the sinking ship, a noble example of bravery, and true fidelity, and the "love that seeketh not its own."

I lately turned to the census of 1851 (that of 1861 not being at hand), to see what light it would throw on my remark, that servants are not only a

very important but also a very numerous class of the community. For this purpose I turned to the details, which are classified under the head of *occupations*, to find these, though appearing at first sight but a dry list of figures, full of interest. In 1851, for instance, Great Britain had of boot and shoe makers, 274,451; of tailors, 152,672; of cloth manufacturers, 137,814. And who can read the numbers of these and other workmen without being impressed with the importance of securing such a secular, and also religious, education to all classes of the community as shall make good citizens of all? Neither for their interests, nor for her own, can society afford to neglect such formidable masses; especially since they have learned the art of banding together, and acting through their unions with the weight and momentum of a single body. Would that our rulers, in the measures they adopted to secure the good order and peace of the country, put more faith in the Acts of the Apostles than in Acts of Parliament, in Bibles than in bayonets, in teachers than in policemen, in schools than in jails and courts of justice!

Here again appears not so much an evil to be guarded against, as a great running sore to be healed—a deformity and a danger both. In that same year of 1851 there were within our shores no fewer than 21,047 vagrants in barns, tents, and fields. Wandering hordes, these went to no church; their children were taught in no school; begging and thieving formed their chief means of livelihood; a terror to the timid and a burden to the industrious, they were savages in a civilized, and heathens in a Christian, land. Recalling the

saying of Defoe, "begging is a shame to any country—a shame that real objects of charity should be compelled, and that those who are not so should be allowed, to beg," this army of vagrants is surely a disgrace to our nation—a monstrous evil which the government and churches of the country should combine their efforts to put down.

The number of printers, amounting to 26,024, presents another and happier feature; one calculated to make us thankful to God for those blessings of knowledge, both secular and religious, which our country so pre-eminently enjoys. What floods of light stream from the presses where her thousands of printers work! With exceptions not worth mentioning, ours is a pure literature; opening up paths to virtue, happiness, and usefulness in this world, and lighting the steps of many a Christian pilgrim to his heavenly home in the next.

Another and yet more sacred influence for good is the pulpit. I have seen a calculation of the extraordinary machine and steam powers of Great Britain: and it may gratify more than the curiosity of Christian readers to see its pulpit power as set forth in the following table:

Olergymen (Epis. Est. Ch.).....	17,621
Ministers: Baptists	1,556
" Independent.....	1,972
" Presbyterian.....	2,725
" Wesleyan.....	1,798
" Protestants not described.....	1,580

Leaving out of account a few Unitarians, some threescore Jewish, and above 1,000 Roman Catholic priests, here were not less than 27,252 ministers of religion, of whom the great mass were engaged

every Lord's day in preaching "Christ and Him crucified." Verily, our eyes see our teachers. There is no famine of the bread of life in this happy land; nor nowadays "is the sound of archers heard at the place of the drawing of water." All the more to our shame, however, that with such a vast amount of evangelizing power, our cities should present moral wastes, where thousands are living, and sinning, and dying without God or hope in the world. One great cause of this lies undoubtedly in denominational jealousies; in those who, as servants of the same Master, should combine for good, as do others for evil, standing aloof, and askance. How might the wilderness be turned into Eden, were each minister, with his congregation, to take a section of the outlying field, and apply to it all the powers of a spiritual husbandry? Thus—nor is it possible otherwise—might our heathen districts be evangelized. No doubt the result of such a plan would be to make one district assume an Episcopalian, another a Presbyterian, a third an Independent, a fourth a Wesleyan character; but made Christian—sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind—what of that?—what though the coat our cities wore were like Joseph's, one of many colors?

The statistics which suggested these thoughts, while I ran over their columns in search of domestic servants, fully warrant what I said of their numbers. With the exception of agricultural out-door laborers, who amounted in 1851 to 1,077,627, there is no class so numerous. The tables, which, not excepting her Majesty from their lists, give 1 queen, give 1,000,000 and more, of servants, as follows:

Servants, Domestic (general).....	754,926
Coachman.....	7,579
Cook.....	48,806
Gardener.....	5,052
Groom.....	16,194
Housekeeper.....	50,574
Housemaid.....	55,935
Nurse.....	39,139
Inn servant.....	60,586

1,038,791

In the light of this prodigious number, of the fact that within Great Britain there were in 1851 more than ONE MILLION of domestic servants—a mass certainly not diminished but increased during the last fifteen years—the subject of this chapter assumes an aspect of immense importance. In this view, the pattern of a good servant presents an object, if not of higher, of wider and much more general interest than even that of a good sovereign. And such a pattern we have, as I now proceed to set forth, in Abraham's steward; as his master called him, in "this Eliezer of Damascus."

Other stones besides the key-stone go to form an arch; but without it, though formed of solid granite, they are useless: no better, be they two or two hundred, than as many cobwebs, to sustain a building or to span a roaring river. Locking all the rest together, it is the key-stone that gives their value to the others. Now such is the virtue which we assign to *fidelity* among the qualifications that form a good servant, and fit any one, whether filling a public or private sphere, for a position of trust. The truthfulness that scorns to resort to an equivocation or tell a lie, the honesty that would not defraud another of the value of a pin, the

fidelity, in one word, that, with a single eye to a master's interest, is as diligent and dutiful out of his sight as in it, behind his back as before his face, this is the first and greatest property of a good servant—one, indeed, that in the judgment of every reasonable and considerate master will make amends for many faults, and be like the "charity that covereth a multitude of sins."

The very long period, to apply these remarks to Eliezer, during which he held the important office of steward in Abraham's house, proves that he possessed this quality in an eminent degree. Though frequent change of place, in some instances, may be more a servant's misfortune than his fault, it is not without reason that a long period of service is regarded as the best proof of fitness and fidelity: for though mere talent, or a happy stroke of fortune, may raise a man or woman to a position of trust, it is only by trustworthiness that they can keep it. Some shift at almost every term—floating about in society like seaweed, the wrack of ocean, that changes its place on the shore at every tide; but Eliezer grew gray in the same house, and held the same office for at least fifty years. He was steward before Isaac was born, and still steward when Isaac was married—two events separated by nearly half a century. In this point of view he should be regarded as a pattern servant; a model, it were as much for the interests of servants as of their masters, they more frequently copied. True to his earthly, as we all should be to our heavenly Master, Eliezer was a "good and *faithful* servant:" and this, which his long possession of office demon-

strates, is beautifully illustrated by an interesting chapter in Abraham's history.

No man in the Bible plays a more high-minded and honorable part than Eliezer—though a servant, and in one sense a slave. Fully to comprehend that, and appreciate his fidelity, it must be remembered that the birth of Isaac, though a happy event to Abraham and Sarah, was far otherwise, in a worldly point of view, to him. It inflicted a blow on Eliezer, which it needed uncommon magnanimity and piety to bear. Till Isaac appeared, this man had good hopes of succeeding to his master's fortune. Such is the way I read, and the meaning I attach to, these words of Abraham: "I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus. Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir"—this Eliezer, one of my slaves, or a child of his. This, no doubt, supposes that in lack of offspring by Sarah, Abraham intended to set aside Lot, his nephew, and also his relatives in Mesopotamia—a resolution which, to those who are ignorant of Eastern habits, may seem unlikely, almost incredible. But it was not so in Abraham's age; nor is it so still in those regions of the world where he lived, and where events are frequently occurring to produce a strong impression of the fact that it is God who setteth up one and putteth down another. There, the revolutions of the wheel of fortune are as strange as sudden; raising, as we read in the book of Esther, a beautiful slave to share his bed and throne with the King of Persia, and taking a man from the gate where he was a porter, and even from the foot of a gallows, to

make him the first minister of state. In illustration of that, hear what Forbes says :—"It is still the custom in India, especially among the Mahometans, that in default of children, and sometimes where there are lineal descendants, the master of a family adopts a slave, frequently a half-Abyssinian of the darkest hue, for his heir. He educates him agreeably to his wishes, and marries him to one of his daughters. As the reward of superior merit, or to suit the caprice of an arbitrary despot, this honor is also conferred on a slave recently purchased, or already grown up in the family ; and to him he bequeaths his wealth in preference to his nephews, or any collateral branches. This is a custom of great antiquity in the East, and prevalent among the most refined and civilized nations."

But the bright prospects which this custom, and the future, opened to Eliezer, vanished at the birth of Isaac. We cannot doubt that he bore his disappointment nobly ; and for his dear master's sake welcomed and even loved the boy who had come between him and a splendid fortune. And yet one hope may still have lingered, and risen sometimes unbidden, in his bosom. Might not Isaac choose to live unwedded ? and die, leaving no heir behind ? But this expectation, if he ever cherished it, was also to be extinguished ; and it was surely no small trial to his fidelity when, commissioned to seek a wife for Isaac, Eliezer had, with his own hand, to quench his last hope of rising in the world—of exchanging poverty for affluence, and a state of servitude for freedom. In such circumstances most people would have intrusted the office to another

agent. Committing it into the hands of one who had strong temptation to play his master false, Abraham, more than by any language, expressed his confidence in the fidelity of his servant; and that he believed this Eliezer of Damascus to be true as its famous steel. What a pattern of faithfulness the servant in whom his master could repose such faith! He was an honor to his class; and not to his class only, but to our common nature. The case recalls a circumstance that happened in our own country, and deserved the admiration with which I read it. A lawsuit, breeding its usual passions, had sprung up between two neighbors. When the time approached for its being heard in court, one of the parties called on the other to say that he did not think it necessary both should lose their time, going each to state his case before the judge; such faith, he said, have I in your integrity, and that you will do as much justice to my claims as to your own, that I will commit my cause into your hands, leaving you, after having stated the arguments on your side, to state them on mine. What rare and great faith to put in any man! Yet the event justified it; he in whose integrity the other reposed such confidence, stating the case so fairly that he lost his own cause, and won his opponent's.

Still more trying were the circumstances in which Eliezer justified Abraham's confidence; nobly justified it. Left to manage the affair as he deemed best, he selected for presents some costly and splendid ornaments; and attended by a retinue that indicated both the rank of his master and the importance of his mission, this faithful servant

bidding a long farewell to all his own hopes of greatness, set out for Mesopotamia. Brown with the dust, and scorched with the heat, and worn out with the toils of a longsome journey, he at length arrives within sight of Nahor; and descends to water his camels at a well outside the city. It was about the evening hour—the time when the sun in these hot countries, shining with tempered rays or kindling the west with his dying glories, invites people to walk abroad, and the world, like a candle which blazes up before it expires, for a brief period resumes its activity ere it sinks into the repose of night. At this hour the women of the city were wont to go forth to draw water; even those of rank in these simple and early days preferring work to *ennui* or idleness, deeming it no more dishonor to bake bread than to eat it, to make a dress than to wear it, to draw water than to drink it—in short, thinking it no shame to engage in what we call, and many despise as, menial occupations. Knowing this, and that she whom God intends for Isaac's bride may be among the women who shall soon come trooping to the well, Eliezer, like a faithful servant who thinks more of his master's business than of his own ease, immediately seeks direction from God. He casts himself on providence, saying, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham . . . And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall

I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master." What an unselfish, noble regard to his master breathes out in this prayer; and what wisdom also in seeking one for Isaac who, by her bearing to himself, should prove herself not high-minded, but humble; not idle, but industrious; not rude, but courteous; not cold, but kind.

The book of Daniel relates a remarkable instance of immediate answer to prayer. "Whiles I was speaking," says the prophet, "and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me . . . and said, O Daniel . . . at the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved." "Greatly beloved" I can believe Eliezer also to have been; for God has no respect of persons—honoring men, whether they be servants or sovereigns, as the spectators do actors on the stage, not for the part they play, but for the way they play it. His prayer was also promptly answered. "Before he had done speaking," as the Bible says, ere the prayer he offered, with his eyes on the city gates, had left his lips, a woman comes out; and, with form graceful and erect, elastic step, and a water-pitcher poised on her shoulder, makes straight for the well. Her attire is such as virgins wore; and her countenance, which beams with the graces that nor time, nor wrinkles, nor disease can efface, is exceeding beautiful,—a woman this to

grace Isaac's house, and tenderly recall to his father's memory the charms that lay mouldering in Machpelah's cave. Can this lovely vision be God's answer to his prayer? He will try; put it to the test he has arranged. Accosting the maiden as she leaves the well, he said, "Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water?" Her gracious reply shows that his arrow has hit the mark. It is she; Nahor's daughter. Nor does He who here, as often, proves himself forward to answer prayer, however backward we may be to make it, fail still further to give Eliezer "good speed." Isaac's proxy, he woos and wins the maid,—left, as all women should be in a matter of such unspeakable importance, to her own free choice. Giving her heart with her hand, her ready answer to Laban's question, "Wilt thou go with this man?" is "I will go." Eliezer has executed his commission. And when in the form of a bride, who drops her veil to conceal her blushes, he presents Isaac with one of the fairest flowers of the East, and not needing marriage revels to drown the recollection of his own disappointment, forgets it in the happiness of his master, how does he justify the confidence of Abraham; and prove himself worthy, in a subordinate sense, of the eulogium that shall crown the labors of every Christian's life, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Eliezer's *diligence* as a servant is almost as conspicuous as his fidelity in that beautiful history which, opening to us many interesting glimpses of Eastern and ancient manners, relates how Isaac got his wife. There are servants who are honest enough, but lazy. They frequently postpone, as

alas ! too many do in the important affairs of salvation, present duties to what they call a more convenient season. "Slothful in business," they go about their work without pith or energy. But Eliezer went to his with a will, as they say ; nor, to use a common proverb, did he *let the grass grow at his heels*. On entering Laban's house, he finds a grateful change from the toil and hardships of his journey. Servants, summoned to the rites of hospitality, hasten to undo his sandals and wash his feet ; luxurious couches invite him to repose ; weary and worn, gladly would he rest ; and poorly sustained on the pulse and dried fruits that formed the fare of the long journey, nature turns with keen appetite to the smoking board that invites him to sit down and eat. But, pattern to all of us in the highest matters, and to servants in their daily and ordinary avocations, he sets the claims of duty before all things else. What his hand finds to do, this man will do now, and do with all his might. He could have found a hundred excuses for delay, but listens to none. He rushes on business. As if every hour and moment were too precious to be lost, he proceeds at once to the matter in hand, and says, waving away the feast, "I will not eat till I have told my errand." It was his meat and drink to do his master's will. Let it be ours, as it was Christ's, our great exemplar, to do the will of our Father in Heaven.

In coasting along the newly-discovered shores of New Zealand, Captain Cook, with that sagacity which in the case of John Knox and others was mistaken for prophetic power, remarked that the time might come when these islands would form

one of our most valuable colonies,—gems in the crown of Britain. Struck with the richness of the foliage and gigantic size of the forest trees, he inferred that that must be a deep rich soil which bore such magnificent timber. Reasoning after this fashion, we might fairly have concluded that the extraordinary virtues of Eliezer must have had their root in a devout and pious heart. Nay, we might have drawn a conclusion favorable to his piety from the very character of his master. Abraham was not less likely than David, and than every good man should be, to regulate his household on these holy principles, “Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me : he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me : he that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house : he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.” But Eliezer’s *piety* is no more than his fidelity and diligence matter of conjecture. In this story he appears pre-eminent as a man of prayer. He displays an extraordinary confidence in the providence and faithfulness of God. He casts himself on Him whom he loves to call his master’s God, with almost as much faith as his master himself could have done. With the first dawn of success, he bows his head, and worships the Lord. “Blessed,” he cries, “be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth.” Not in our judgment only, but in his own, it is not his own skill but the Lord who leads him ; it is not good fortune but the Lord who speeds him ; and indeed it were difficult to say whether the sentiments he breathes are most fragrant with piety

toward God, or with affection to his master. The saying, *Like master like man*, had never a happier or more beautiful illustration than in the venerable patriarch and his pious steward.

Were there more masters like Abraham there would certainly be more servants like Eliezer—more who would in their honesty, fidelity, and piety show the results of a master or mistress's holy example ; the benefits, by some servants too lightly esteemed, which may be expected from dwelling with a religious family, in a house where the Sabbath is carefully observed and God is daily worshipped. I have heard servants loudly complained of, and unfavorable contrasts drawn between those of our own and of older times. I would not conceal their faults. Though with a kind hand, I would rather lay them bare, that they might be amended. Yet, when I have heard some complaining, for example, of the ingratitude of servants, I have been tempted to ask what many of them have to be grateful for. They have feelings to be hurt as well as others ; and how have I seen them lacerated and rudely torn ! Removed from home and friends, they are peculiarly sensitive to kindness ; but its words in many instances never fall on their ear. Affections that, like tendrils torn from their support, would attach themselves, in lack of father or mother, to master or mistress, are left to lie bleeding on the ground ; and in many instances are trodden under foot. Far from parental care, no kind eye watches over them, nor kind voice warns them of the snares that beset their feet. Many show no more interest in their servants' souls than if they had no souls to be

saved ; and less care is taken to preserve their virtue from seducers than the family-plate from thieves. They may well ask in such cases, "What have we to be grateful for?" I do not defend their faults : but, so far as my knowledge and experience go, it is but justice to them to say that, were more regard paid to the feelings of servants, more forbearance shown with their failings, more pains taken to make them happy, to keep them from the paths of vice, to cultivate their virtues and bless their souls, there would be less occasion to complain of their depravity, and of the degeneracy of the times. With more holy we should have many more happy households, presenting, as in Abraham's, the beautiful sight of pious servants and pious masters growing gray together.

Let me frankly tell servants, on the other hand, that they often have themselves to blame. They forfeit respect by a miserable aping of the manners of their superiors. They waste on their indulgences or on vain and showy attire the means which would save a parent from the degradation of public charity, and provide for the wants of their own old age. Yielding to the temptation of higher wages, they will leave a Christian house for one where they will see no good, but much bad example ; imperilling their precious souls, like Lot, when, less repelled by its sins than allured by its green and well-watered pastures, he " pitched his tent toward Sodom." If crimes are committed against servants, they are also committed by them. Falsehood and dishonesty are not the worst they may commit ; and the guilt of receiving some simple and unsuspecting one into a house to accomplish her ruin, is only

equalled by that of a servant who carries vice into a virtuous family, and more wickedly betrays her trust than it were to steal down at midnight with muffled foot, and open the door to thieves.

There are many good servants in the world. Who would be so, let them take for their directory and motives these words of St. Paul: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice as menpleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men: knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve Christ." Such God will reward, though they should meet here only cold neglect. But since good servants are as valuable to a good master as he can be to them, they may rest assured that, with the exceptional cases, their virtues will go not unrewarded even of men. With all its faults, there has been no age of the world in which diligence and fidelity, to say nothing of piety, have not been held in high esteem. Not the least interesting of the monuments I saw amid the venerable ruins of Rome was one which held within its broken urn some half-burned bones. They were the ashes of one, who, as appeared from the inscription on the tablet, had belonged to Cæsar's household, and to the memory of whose virtues as a faithful, honest, and devoted servant, the Emperor himself had ordered that marble to be raised. When wandering among the tombstones of a quiet churchyard, nothing has pleased me more than to light on one raised by a family over the grave of some old faithful nurse, or aged retainer of their house; and near by this

“gray metropolis of the north” there lies a cemetery, where the traveller who goes to meditate among the tombs will find a monumental stone erected by our own gracious Sovereign to the memory of a faithful servant. Such honors are rare ; too rare ; too seldom bestowed. Let servants see to it that they are not too seldom deserved ; and that, “doing all as to the Lord and not to men,” they earn, besides their wages, such a character as his master might have engraven on Eliezer’s tombstone,—NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS, FERVENT IN SPIRIT, SERVING THE LORD.

Joseph the Successful Man.

WHATEVER way we turn a diamond, it flashes out rays of light—of various hues, but all exquisitely beautiful. Such a gem is the story of Joseph. Indeed, it is in many respects unique. A universal favorite, one over which gentle childhood bends with interest and venerable age with tears, it is in some respects as unrivalled in the Bible, as the Bible is unrivalled among books.

Regarded only as a literary composition, with what inimitable beauty and pathos is the story told? In Jacob's doting love for the motherless boy—the first-born of his beloved Rachel; in the wildness of that grief the bloody cloak awoke, and sons and daughters rose in vain to comfort; in the rebound of his feelings at the news from Egypt, from the unbelief that heard them as too good to be true, to the vehement emotion that burst out in the cry, "Joseph my son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I die;" in the wakening up of the consciences, the dread and the remorse, of the guilty brothers; in the trembling question, "Is your father well, the old man of whom you spake? Is he yet alive?" in the tender recollections that woke at the sight of Benjamin, and sent Joseph to another chamber to preserve his disguise and relieve his heart by a flood of tears; in that match-

less address of Judah's when, making us forget his crimes and mingle our tears with his, he pleaded for the old man's sake, and offered himself a ransom for the trembling boy; and in the events that immediately followed the disclosure, when, unable any longer to restrain his feelings, Joseph tore off the mask, and crying, "I am Joseph, your brother," he broke out into such a burst of passionate emotion that his weeping was heard throughout all the house: in these, there are touches of nature which the greatest uninspired genius never approached—so fine, so true, so tender, that no man of ordinary sensibility could read the story aloud, but his tongue would falter and his eyes be dimmed with tears.

Considered simply as a story, what novel paints scenes more interesting, or relates events so picturesque and romantic? To apply a common expression to this portion of sacred Scripture, it is "eminently sensational:" equally so with those highly-seasoned tales which in our periodical literature, and especially in the lowest departments of it, feed the public appetite for excitement, wonders, crimes, and horrors. Yet how much they differ! Its details are true, while theirs are false; and while their tendency is to debase rather than improve the taste or purify the heart, the history of Joseph recommends itself, as I hope to show, by its lofty morality, the spirit of piety which it breathes, and the lessons of wisdom which it teaches. Seek stories that rouse and sustain our interest by remarkable vicissitudes of fortune, the play of lights and shadows, sudden alternations of sunshine and of storm, scenes both

of the wildest grief and of ecstatic joy, hair-breadth escapes from horrid crimes, from pit, and prison, and deadly perils, where shall we find one to compare with Joseph's? No man, I ever read of, had such experience of the vicissitudes of life, passed unscathed through so many strange and fiery trials, met with deliverances so signal, or had more apparent cause to doubt, and in the end more real cause to acknowledge, a presiding providence and the goodness of God.

Passed in quiet studies, or domestic duties, or the routine of business, and in the common walks of piety, there are many good lives that would make very dull books. Hence, though their works may be published, and are such that the world would not willingly allow to perish, some great men have found no biographers. Their lives lacked stirring incidents, being marked by none but such as are common to humanity. But while their lives resembled some rich but level country, where cottages stand embowered amid smiling orchards, and village spires and castle towers rise above umbrageous woods, and fields wave with bounteous harvests, and fat herds slake their thirst at streams which flow between sedgy banks quietly to the sea—the life of Joseph is eminently picturesque. It resembles the scenes that lend their charms to the Alps or Apennines, where the thundering cataract and foaming torrent alternate with lakes that lie asleep in the arms of beauty, where frowning crags look down on flowery meadows, and deep dark valleys are parted by mountains whose peaks pierce the azure sky, and, glistening with

eternal snows, seem to bear up the vault of heaven.

The interest of such scenes and the pleasure they afford is much enhanced if religion lends them her dignity, and their physical is associated with circumstances of moral grandeur. Such is the case, for example, in the grand valleys of Piedmont, the mountain-home of the Waldenses, where their fathers prayed and fought for three long centuries—so persecuted by bloody Papists, that, as one of their historians says, “every rock became a monument, every meadow saw executions, and every village had its roll of martyrs.” Even so, the interest of Joseph’s story deepens when, penetrating beneath the surface, we discover in him a type of Christ, and see how many of the events of his life appear to foreshadow some of the leading incidents in our Saviour’s. Many are the points of resemblance in the histories of Joseph and of Jesus. This may be, so to speak, more of accident than intention; yet the analogies between the two are remarkable, and will interest and instruct us, if they do nothing more.

Both were the beloved sons of their fathers. Both were envied and hated of their brethren. Both were the victims of base conspirators. Both had a remarkable garment, and were stripped of it by cruel hands. Both, though innocent, were accused of the foulest crimes. Both were tempted to great sins, and both alike recoiled from and repelled the tempters—the “Get thee behind me, Satan!” of Jesus recalling Joseph’s words when starting back, horror sitting on his face, he protested, saying, “How can I do this great wicked-

ness and sin against God?" Both were slain—the one in fact, the other in intention. Both not only forgave, but saved their murderers. In both cases these "thought evil, but God meant it unto good." Joseph's burial in the pit is a symbol of Christ's in the tomb. He comes from both pit and prison a type of Him whom death could not hold in his grasp, nor the grave in her ancient fetters. And in that young Hebrew whom Pharaoh calls from a prison to the palace that he may invest him with imperial authority, and commit into his hands the management of his kingdom—in the words of Scripture, to put his seal on his hand, to array him in vesture of fine linen, to put a gold chain upon his neck, to make him ride in the second chariot which he had, to send heralds before him, crying, "Bow the knee,"—we see Jesus. Here is a type and shadow of our glorified and ascended Lord, as He stands at the right hand of God, and at the mandate, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," ten times ten thousand fall prostrate at his feet. From Egypt's streets and palace we are carried away to the celestial city—to the scene where the four living creatures, and the four-and-twenty elders, with harps and golden vials full of odors which are the prayers of saints, fall down before the Lamb, and sing the new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

In leaving such sacred and lofty topics for that feature of Joseph's life which is indicated in the title of this article, it may appear that I am making

a great descent. Success is not always another term for merit and worth, for excellence of conduct and nobleness of character. But however some may have climbed up by foul means, marking their path with slime, so did not this child, not of fortune, but of God. While its success is one of the most remarkable features of Joseph's career, it was won, with God's blessing, by those virtues which form the true foundations of a happy, useful, and successful life. It may be to our profit and advantage to consider his history in this light. Promising before we part to trace his success to these, and draw from his career some useful lessons, let me now ask my readers to look at him as the very type and model of A Successful Man.

The heathens had a goddess whom they called Fortune. She is commonly represented standing by a wheel. From this, which she turns round and round, are drawn the blanks and prizes in which she assigns their different destinies to men, without any respect whatever to their merits and demerits. She could not do otherwise, indeed ; for while her hand is on the wheel, a bandage is on her eyes. So all things fall out by chance, blind and indiscriminating chance,—a man who deserves a prize often receiving a blank, while success falls to the lot of such as, indolent and unworthy, have no claim to reward.

No picture of the world could be more fallacious. Dethroning God, it denies a superintending Providence ; and reducing everything to blind fate and chaotic confusion, it makes man the sport of elements over which neither he, nor any one else, has

the least control. In its practical influence this doctrine must be eminently pernicious. It weakens, or rather destroys, all the springs of activity, and furnishes sloth, and self-indulgence, and vice itself with a too acceptable excuse.

Unchristian as it is, this old heathen notion is still, and to some extent, current among us. This may be owing to those occasional cases where we see success attending such as appear to have done nothing to deserve it; and where, on the other hand, we see meritorious men outstripped by inferior rivals. From such cases we, ignorant of all the circumstances, are apt to draw too hasty conclusions—looking on them with the gloomy eyes of him who complained, “I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill: but time and chance happeneth to all.” Account for it as we may, Fortune, though she has no temple, has still her worshippers. More than would be willing to confess it, trust not a little to chance. Reckless or lazy, they hope that something will turn up: and to how great an extent the old heathen notion still exists, and keeps its hold of men, crops out in the terms so frequently applied to one whose career has been signalized by remarkable success. He is called a Child of Fortune—a Favorite of Fortune.

The ideas these terms convey are quite illusory, and calculated to have a most prejudicial effect on the minds especially of the young—of those who have the work and battle of life before them. Not more impious, and less pernicious, was the idea

expressed in the speech of a Norseman—one of that brave, indomitable, self-reliant, battle-fighting, sea-subduing adventurous race, to whose blood flowing in our veins Britons owe their enterprise, the energy which has won brilliant victories in fight, and planted prosperous colonies in all quarters of the globe. Bringing to the work of life an indomitable energy, compelling the winds that blew around, and the waves that thundered on his stormy shores, to waft him on to fortune, the old pagan—a skilful seaman, a dauntless soldier, one who had cultivated with equal success the arts of peace and war, is reported to have said, “I believe neither in idols nor in demons: I put all my trust in my strength of body and of soul!” What a contrast to his bold atheism, and also to their confidence who trust in the blind throws of Fortune, the language of the pious Psalmist: “God is my strength and power, and He maketh my way perfect. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms. Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation, and thy gentleness hath made me great! The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation”? Equally enlightened and devout were the sentiments of Joseph. A Divine Providence is gratefully acknowledged in the very names of his children. He calls his first-born Manasseh, saying, “For God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father’s house;” and enshrining the same acknowledgment in the name of his second, he calls him Ephraim, “For God,” he said, “hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

These cases, that of David and this of Joseph, present, it may be admitted, such remarkable changes of fortune as to constrain the dullest to acknowledge Him who setteth up one, and pulleth down another. But on the other hand such cases are, it may be said, so rare, that they can furnish no proper stimulus to exertion. By no means. It is not uncommon for men to rise from obscurity to fame and fortune, if, denying themselves and exerting their energies to the utmost, they seize the opportunities Providence presents, and our great English dramatist describes, saying—

“ There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ! ”

For example, what circumstances apparently more desperate some twenty years ago than his who now rules France, and holds the destinies of Europe in his hands? Then, an exile, a homeless wanderer, he was indulging in visions of conquest which excited only the pity of women and the scorn of sensible men. Yet improbable as once it seemed, his dream has come to pass—come true as his who, in brethren on their knees at his feet, saw the sheaves of a boyish dream bending to his. History proves what men, for their encouragement, would do well to remember, that there is no trade nor position, however humble, from which, God favoring them, some have not climbed the ladder at the heels, though not perhaps to the height, of Joseph.

For example, John Bunyan was originally a tinker; Faraday, the celebrated chemist, a book-binder; the inventor of the steam-engine, a black-

smith ; John Foster, whose writings will live with our tongue, a weaver ; Cook, the distinguished navigator, a day laborer ; Carey, the first of missionaries, a cobbler ; Hugh Miller, a mason ; while Jeremy Taylor, Arkwright, the founder of our cotton manufactures, and Tenterden, the great Lord Chief-Justice of England, issued from barbers' shops. And in less famous spheres our merchants and men of commerce present equally remarkable examples of the success that rewards industry and exertion. How many of them have entered the towns where they laid the foundation, and built up the fabric, of gigantic fortunes, as poor as the lonely wanderer who crossed the fords of Jordan with only a staff in his hand.

The foundations of Joseph's fortune, the steps by which he rose from slavery, the pit, and the prison, to be the second man in Egypt, were not essentially different from that wisdom, and self-denial, and self-control, and energy of character by which, with sound principles and God's blessing, many have commanded, and others may still command, a brilliant success. This I will show. I would meanwhile remark that the world has seldom seen such a rapid and great change of fortune. Not incredible, the story is yet so improbable, that we might have scrupled to receive it on any but Divine authority. He would be a bold novelist who would venture to weave some of its incidents into the pages of a romance.

In his early loss of a tender mother ; in the malignant hatred of his brothers ; in his sudden change from the fond caresses of an indulgent father to the blows, and tears, and chains of

slavery ; in the vindictive persecution of his mistress ; in suffering, though innocent, the penalty of guilt ; in years of weary and long imprisonment ; in the sense of injustice and cruel wrong ; in the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick ; in the prospect of wasting his youth, and closing his unhappy days, unknown and unpitied, within the bars of a prison—no man was more unfortunate. Yet in whose history was the hand of Providence more visible ! What perils—more formidable than these, what temptations, he escaped ! His doom is to be slain—fate more horrible, to be starved to death, to pine away of hunger in the bottom of a darksome pit, with no ear to hear his moans, nor hand to lend him help ; yet he escapes. He is a slave ; yet what slave so fortunate ?—he is sold to a master who appreciates his worth, and bestows on the bondsman a confidence which few freemen enjoy. He is a prisoner ; but the frowns of fortune are changed to smiles. He wins the regard of his gaoler, and rises into an office of trust. Strange man, he is never down but ere long he is up again—rising like a life-buoy which, buried under a mountain of water, is soon riding triumphant on the top of the waves. Twice is he rescued from imminent death. Twice he escapes what seems hopeless imprisonment. The very cause that threw him down becomes a ladder by which he climbs to fortune—one dream consigns him to the pit, and another raises him to the palace.

What a revolution in his fate within the brief space of a single day ! It had made other men dizzy. He exchanges a captive's chain for ornaments of gold ; the prison garb for courtly vesture

the narrow walls of a gaol for crowded streets through which, amid acclaims that rend the skies, he is borne in a royal chariot—heralds in advance opening the way, and crying, “Bow the knee.” He was Potiphar’s slave; he has become Potiphar’s lord. He begged favors of a butler; the proudest princes of Egypt now live in his smiles and tremble at his frown. His word is law; his countenance is sunshine; and if we might make the comparison, as God, bestowing all grace through his beloved Son, says to sinners and suppliants, “Go to Jesus,” Pharaoh, constituting Joseph the channel and minister and dispenser of his royal favors, refers all affairs to him, saying as we are told he said, “Go to Joseph!” And thus in Joseph, once entreating cruel brothers for his life, once toiling through the desert sands, a lonely, weeping, captive boy, but now surrounded with royal state, now married into a princely house, now the Governor of Egypt, now the second man in the kingdom, now honored by the highest, loved by the humblest, and regarded by all, from the monarch on his throne to the peasant that ploughed his fields under the shadow of the pyramids and on the green banks of the Nile, as the saviour and benefactor of the land, in this successful man we see, perhaps, the most remarkable illustration of the words of Solomon, “Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men.”

Let us now trace Joseph’s success to its sources. They were two.

1. It was due to God.

The sun—for a long time acknowledged to be the centre around which all the planets roll—is coming

to be regarded as also the main source of those forces which, under different forms, play their different parts in the world. To him, for instance, the wheel on which some dashing stream flings itself, by its impetus and weight turning the grindstones of the mill, or the whirring spindles of the factory, owes its power. It was his heat which raised the waters of the sea into vapor; floating in the realms of air, this vapor was condensed into clouds; and these descended in the rain which, gathered by a thousand rills into stream and river, sets all the wheels in motion. Not less to the sun we owe the wonders achieved by steam,—our rapid flight on the iron rails; the victories it wins on the deep; the gigantic arms it moves in our service, and at our bidding, where fires blaze and tall chimneys smoke. No doubt, the moving force is, in the first instance, steam; but the steam is due to the fires of the furnace; and the fires of the furnace are maintained by the fuel it devours; and the fuel, whether wood of forests or coal from the bowels of earth, originally derived all its heat from the sun—wood and coal being magazines of sunbeams. This holds equally true of animal as of mechanical forces. The tiger leaps, the eagle soars, the elephant treads the forest with imperial foot, the fisherman pulls his oar, and the blacksmith swings his hammer on the sounding forge; all, man and beast, by virtue of a force that descended from the skies. The strength, for example, of man's arm lies in its muscles; their strength we owe to our food; our food we owe to the earth; and its fruits owe their existence and nutritive properties to that sun whose heat and light clothe the

naked soil with verdant pastures and the fields with their golden harvests.

By following a corresponding process, we would be conducted through many an intervening step to God himself, as the great final cause of all things and events. Universal Lord, Maker and Ruler of all, He is in all and over all; so that there is a sense in which, not Joseph's fortunes only, but all things, are due to Him. The life of angels, He is also the life of insects. The planets are rolled through space by the same hand that shapes every leaf and paints the humblest flower: and as "nothing was made without Him that is made," nothing happens without Him that does happen—whether it be the fall of a kingdom or of a sparrow.

The footprints of a man are not more visible on the surface of new-fallen snow than are the proofs of a Divine power and presence throughout all the kingdom of Nature: nor is there need to quote Scripture to prove, and adduce crimes to illustrate, our depravity, and how the "carnal mind is enmity against God," so long as we have philosophers, so called, who refer everything to mere material agencies; and excluding all recognition of a Supreme Intelligence, recall these words of an Apostle: "The world by wisdom knew not God."

What are the Laws of Nature, for the sake of which God is thrust from his imperial throne; disowned and dishonored by the creatures of his hand? Law presupposes a law-maker—a mind to foresee the end, and the appointment of means adequate to bring it about—to secure its accomplishment. And just as the laws of our country,

to borrow a figure from society, are the expressions of the will of Parliament, what are the laws of nature, properly defined, and traced to their native source, but the expression and outgoing of the will of God? That will, like ours, works through the instrumentality of means; and "it is curious," says the Duke of Argyll, in a profound and subtle book which he has published, called 'The Reign of Law,' "how the language of the grand seers of the Old Testament corresponds with this idea. They uniformly ascribe all the operations of nature—the greatest and the smallest—to the working of Divine power. But they never revolt—as so many do in these weaker days—from the idea of this power working by wisdom and knowledge in the use of means: nor in this point of view do they ever separate between the work of creation and the work which is going on daily in the existing world. Exactly the same language is applied to the rarest exertions of power and to the gentlest and most constant of all natural operations. Thus the saying that 'the Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath He established the heavens,' is coupled in the same breath with this other saying: 'By his knowledge the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down the dew.'" The Bible furnishes many other illustrations of this important remark of our noble author, one of which may be quoted for the beauty of its poetry, and for its correct and scientific theory of rain:—"Seek Him," says the prophet Amos, "that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that *calleth the waters*

of the sea and poureth them out on the face of the earth : the Lord is his name."

But, while there is thus a sense in which all things may be attributed to God and a sense even in which "He made the wicked for the day of evil," Joseph's history furnishes examples of a special providence—if not of miraculous, of very marvellous as well as manifest interpositions of God. "Who knoweth," said Mordecai to Esther, when urging that noble woman to risk life and all for the sake of her people, "who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" The special providence which seemed, though probable, still problematical to Mordecai in Esther's fortunes, no man can doubt, held the helm of Joseph's. Though somewhat like the course of a boat, now riding upon the top of the waves and now lost in the trough of the sea, or like that of a traveller crossing a mountain region, who now stands on sunny heights and anon descends into the sombre depths of valleys, Joseph's course, with many ups and downs, goes right to its mark—from the point where he starts to the goal he reaches. How manifest is it in his case, that a Divine eye—none else could—saw the end from the beginning? But what a special providence did all the vicissitudes of his chequered life—those things men call accidents—like successive waves, bear him on and up to the position where he accomplished his singular destiny; saving his family, and through them the hope of the Messiah? What hand but one Divine could have forged the chain which linked long years together; the sheepfolds of Hebron with the proud palaces of

Egypt ; the dreams of the boy with the deeds of the man? To take up but its principal links: he dreams, and becomes in consequence the object of his brothers' hatred ; through their hatred he is sold into slavery ; through slavery he enters the house of Potiphar ; through events that happen in that house, he is consigned to a prison ; in the prison he meets one of Pharaoh's servants ; in consequence of interpreting the servant's dream he is summoned to interpret his master's ; and *that*, the last link of a chain which has its first far away in his father's tent, is fastened to the throne of Egypt.

"Surely," said the patriarch, "God is in this place!" As surely God was in that plan. Perhaps, in most instances, He only interfered with the ordinary laws of nature to the extent of controlling them with a divine hand—as when He restrained Joseph for years from inquiring after his father, when a courier mounted on a dromedary would have brought him tidings of the old man in a very few days. That fact can only be explained by a special providence. And without a constant, divine superintendence, a superintendence that wrought out its ends by many instrumentalities, even by dreams, and crimes, and the cruelest, vilest passions that rage in human bosoms, how often had Joseph's fortunes been completely wrecked? No hand but God's could have steered his bark through the storms, shoals, reefs, and quicksands of his romantic and eventful life ; and well therefore might he acknowledge God in his remarkable success, saying to his brothers, "As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto

good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."

2. Under God, his success was due to himself.

There is a passage in Palgrave's 'Central Arabia,' on reading which I thought, "So Pharaoh and Joseph may have been seen." Palgrave tells how the street was filled with a great throng of people. There is a commotion in the crowd. Opening, it shows an armed band advancing. They form a circle that has its centre occupied by those whose dress, with the respectful distance observed by their followers, announce their superior rank. It is the monarch. His step is measured, his demeanor grave and somewhat haughty. His robe is a Cashmere shawl. He wears a rich turban on his head, and at his girdle a gold-mounted sword. He moved, a cloud of perfumes; and as he walked along his eye never rested, but flung eager glances, rapid and brilliant, on the surrounding crowd. By his side walked one also wearing a sword, but mounted with silver, not with gold; and also richly dressed, though in somewhat less costly materials. This man's face was more remarkable than his attire. It wore a courtly expression, and beamed with unusual intelligence. Of these two, the first was Telal, the king; the second Zaniel, his treasurer, his prime minister, his sole minister. In this man I saw Joseph at the right hand of Pharaoh. Their offices were alike. They resembled each other in this also, that both had risen to the highest from the humblest position in life. Joseph had been a slave; a prisoner; falsely accused and cruelly wronged. Zaniel had been an orphan, a ragged boy. His early years were passed in beg-

gary ; nor was it by a mere wave of fortune that he was flung into his high position. He had climbed to it. He owed it to his admirable dispositions, remarkable talents, unwearied industry, skill in business, and extraordinary force of character. In this also the resemblance between the two was remarkable. For it was, under God, to his high moral and rare mental qualities, and not in any degree to chance or fortune, that the young Hebrew slave reached power and dignity, becoming governor of the kingdom which he had entered as a slave.

Not simply to the wind, however auspicious, does the seaman owe his progress. Without it, indeed, his ship would but rise and fall in the swell of the deep ; but without the skill to catch and use the breeze, and compel it, even when adverse, by dexterous trimming of the yards, and setting of the sails, and handling of the helm, to force him on and over the waves, what service were the wind to him ? So was it in Joseph's, and so it is in all cases of success. God gives the opportunities ; but success turns on the use we make of them ; on the promptitude with which we seize the openings of providence ; on the weight of character we bring into the field : on the resolution and energy we throw into our business.

This is an important practical truth. And to illustrate it let me now show how Joseph possessed and employed those powers and properties which, if Providence, so to speak, affords a man the ordinary chances of life, will win and command success.

First of all, and to begin with that which gives

the best foundation for prosperity in this world, and the only assurance of salvation in the next, Joseph was a man of sterling piety and the most virtuous principles. Early instructed by a devout father, he never forgot the lessons of home and the God of his youth. So, those who robbed him of his coat did not rob him of his character; nor, though reduced to slavery, could his mistress, by her frowns or favors, induce him to become the slave of sin. The young, when the only thing they should fear is guilt, are often afraid to stand up for truth and virtue. Pattern to them, he was not: neither concealing his regard for God, nor his horror of sin. By his piety and virtue he won the confidence of his heathen masters. They saw that the Lord was with him; and acknowledged the blessing of having, though he was but a bondsman, a pious servant beneath their roof.

Again, to the unsullied innocence of virtuous youth, Joseph united the wisdom and sagacity of age. An exception to the proverb that you cannot put an old head on young shoulders, with what cool skill and consummate foresight did he choose the steps necessary, and most likely, to attain his object! Thus by dexterous statesmanship he saved Egypt from the horrors of famine; he added to the power of the crown without enslaving the people; he carried Pharaoh and the country safely through a tremendous crisis. And see how the sagacity which characterized his acts as a statesman appeared in the steps he took, and took with so much success, to awaken the consciences of his brethren; and, bringing them to a sense of their sin, lay them true penitents at the feet of that God

whose laws they had so grossly violated, and of a brother they had so cruelly wronged?

Again, many people fail of success in their profession and pursuits by neglecting the opportunities which Providence presents. They are not prompt to seize them and turn them to the most advantage. But see how Joseph pushed in, wherever he saw an opening. He has Pharaoh's butler for a fellow-prisoner. Something may come out of that. In this man, menial as he was, and as to the credit of Joseph's foresight it fell out, he may one day, to use a common expression in its literal as well as figurative sense, have "a friend at court." So, though it offered but what is called a chance, he does not allow the opportunity to escape. He bespeaks the good offices of the butler; teaching us, in our intercourse with mankind, never to make an enemy if we can avoid it, and, when it is possible, always to make a friend.

Again, observe how, sure token of his rising one day to be the master of others, Joseph had acquired the mastery over himself. To the aid of piety he brought that strength of mind and resolution of purpose, for lack of which, perhaps, men equally pious have yielded to temptations he stoutly resisted; have shamefully fallen where he stood; have lost the battle where he won a splendid victory. A grand thing, next to Divine grace the grandest thing, to cultivate, is decision of character. To that, in combination with the grace of God, Joseph owed it, I believe, that he came unscathed from the fiery furnace into which he was thrown in the house of Potiphar. On that resolute breast of his, temptations broke, like sea waves on

a rocky headland. Nor do his strength of purpose and the power he had acquired over himself appear less remarkable in other passages of his life. It is difficult for us with unfaltering tongue to read the affecting scenes that passed between him and his brothers ere he dropped the mask. What his strength of mind, who could go through them without a trace of emotion! He is racked with anxiety about his aged father; his bosom swells to the bursting at the sight of brothers to whom he yearns to disclose himself, that he may lock them in fond embraces. Yet he preserves a calm, and if not cold, an unimpassioned bearing—like a mountain whose head is crowned with snows, and whose sides are mantled with green forests, and vineyards, and groves of olives, while the fires of a volcano are raging within its bosom.

Lastly, there remains one feature of Joseph's character deserving of special notice. Along with an iron will, and an energy no task could daunt, no labor weary, no burden crush, he had a gentle, tender, loving heart. Unselfish, he was ready to sympathize with others. One day, for instance, when they seemed more than usually depressed, how kindly does he ask his fellow prisoners, "Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?" Then what a tender heart his, who, enduring wrong in Potiphar's house with the silent heroism of a martyr, throws himself in yonder palace into the arms of his brethren, and weeps over them like a woman? I have no doubt whatever that to the generous, kindly, loving disposition which Joseph possessed, and all should cultivate, he owed not a little of his remarkable success. It won the regards and good-

will of others—kind affections often doing men such service as the arms which a creeping plant throws around a pole does it, when, springing from the ground, it rises by help of the very object it embraces.

Such was Joseph. Just because he was such, God opening up his way and blessing him, he was a successful man.

There was once a sailor, the only survivor of a shipwreck, who had a singular fate. Caught in the arms of a mountain billow as it went rolling to break in spray and snowy foam on an Orcadian headland, he was not dashed to pieces, but flung right into the mouth of a vast sea-cave, where the wave left him "safe and sound." His fortune, if possible, was stranger still. On recovering from the shock, and groping about, he found a barrel of provisions the same wave had swept in. With this, and water trickling from the roof to quench his thirst, he sustained life, till, hearing a human cry mingling with the clang of sea-birds, a brave cragsman of these isles was swung over the precipice, and rescued him from his rocky prison. A wonderful providence! But it was no such wave of fortune that cast Joseph into the high post he filled.

An example for men to imitate, he owed nothing to fortune, but, under God, everything to himself—to his piety, his pure and high morality, his extraordinary self-control, the patience with which he bore, the faith with which he waited, the perseverance with which he pursued his objects, an iron will and an indomitable energy. These are properties which by prayer and pains the young should seek to acquire, and the oldest should assiduously

cultivate. To these, more than to genius, or to great talents, or to any of those things which are called good fortune, the greatest of men have ascribed their success. I could produce a hundred testimonies to that effect, but none better than the one with which I now close this paper. In a letter to his son, Sir Fowell Buxton, a great and eminently Christian man, says :—“ You are now at that period of life in which you must make a turn to the right or to the left. You must now give proof of principle, determination, and strength of mind ; or you must sink into idleness, and acquire the habits and character of an ineffective young man. I am sure that a young man may be very much what he pleases. In my own case it was so. Much of my happiness and all my prosperity in life have resulted from the change I made at your age.” Elsewhere he says : “ The longer I live, the more I am certain that the great difference between men, between the feeble and the powerful, the great and the insignificant, is energy, invincible determination—a purpose once fixed, and then death or victory !”

Moses the Patriot.

TAKE him for all in all, regard him not in one but many aspects, Moses is the greatest character in history, sacred or profane.

As a *writer*, for example, he takes precedence of the most venerable authors of antiquity. Consecrating, so to speak, the press, the first book types ever printed was a copy of the Holy Scriptures; and in beautiful harmony with that remarkable providence, it is more than probable that the first book pen ever wrote was one of the five of which Moses was the author. Certain it is that if his were not the first ever written—written long ages before Herodotus composed his history, or Homer sang his poems—his are the oldest books extant. Before all others in point of time, what author occupies himself with themes of such surpassing grandeur? Like one who had met God face to face within the cloudy curtains of the awful mount, he introduces us into the counsels of the Almighty; and records events which, receding into a past, and stretching forward into a future eternity, had God for their author, the world for their theatre, and for their end the everlasting destinies of mankind. Apart from the surpassing grandeur of his subjects, even in the very manner of handling them, the world's oldest is its foremost

writer. What other poet rises to heights or sustains a flight so lofty as Moses—in his dying song, for instance, his parting words to the tribes of Israel, ere he ascended Nebo to wave them his last farewell, and vanish forever from their wondering, weeping gaze? The inimitable pathos of his style as illustrated in the story of Joseph, the tears and trembling voices of readers in all ages have acknowledged. In simple, tender, touching narrative no passages in any other book will compare with it; and yet so wide and varied is his range that the writings of Moses contain, infidels themselves being judges, the sublimest expressions man has spoken or penned. By universal consent, for example, no other book, ancient or modern, the production of the highest mind and of the most refined and cultivated age, contains a sentence so sublime as this: “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”

Again, as a *divine*, compared to his knowledge of the attributes and character of God, how gross the notions of the heathen; how puerile, dim, and distorted the speculations of their greatest sages! The wisest of them look like men with unsteady steps and outstretched arms, groping for truth in the dark. As to the mass of the people, they imputed crimes and vices to their gods which would now-a-days consign men to the gallows, or banish them from decent society. But how pure, and comprehensive also, Moses' estimate of the Divine character—of what we are to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of men! Since his day—removed from our own by almost four thousand years—science has made prodigious

strides ; but those who have discovered new elements, new forces, new worlds, new stars, new suns, have brought to light no new attribute of God, nor a single feature of his character with which Moses was not acquainted. During these long ages philosophers and divines have been studying morals, the duties men owe to God and to each other, the laws that bind society and hold its parts together ; but they who have added a thousand truths to science and a thousand inventions to art, have not discovered any duties which Moses overlooked, or added so much as one law to his code of morals. Yet he had no Bible, as we have, whereby to acquaint himself with God : nor was he reared, like us, in a Christian land, but among those who, with all their boasted learning, worshipped the ox, and serpent, beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and creeping things—divinities so innumerable, that it was said there were more gods than men in Egypt. Let the character of his age, and the circumstances in which he lived, be taken into account, and he is the greatest of divines ; nor does his sublime knowledge of God, of the mysteries of religion, and of the moralities of life, admit of any but one explanation. The glory of his writings and of his face are to be traced to the same source. He was admitted into the secret counsels of the Eternal ; and spake, like other holy men of old, as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.

Again, as a *leader and legislator* Moses occupies a place no other man has approached, far less attained to. History records no such achievements as his who, without help from man, struck the fetters off a million and more of slaves ; placing

himself at their head, led them forth from the land of bondage ; reducing them to order, controlled more turbulent and subdued more stubborn elements than any before or since have had to deal with ; formed a great nation out of such base materials ; and, casting into the shade the celebrated retreat of the ten thousand Greeks, conducted to a successful issue the longest and hardest march on record—a march continued for forty years in the face of formidable enemies, through howling wildernesses and desert sands. Then look at the sacred and secular polity which he established in Israel ! That constitution which makes our country the envy of the world has been, like an oak, the slow growth of ages ; and it was often only after long and sometimes bloody struggles that right here prevailed over might, and laws were established that render equal justice to all classes of the community. But, event unparalleled in any other age or country, Moses established in Israel a form of government and a code of laws which neither time nor experience has been able to improve. Like the goddess fabled to have sprung, full grown and full armed, from the head of Jupiter, or like those who never hung on mother's breast, the man and woman whom Eden received to its blissful bowers, it was mature and perfect from the beginning. What a man was he who, in that rude and early age, inculcated laws that have formed, through all succeeding ages, the highest standard of morality ! Since his long-distant day men have run to and fro and knowledge has been increased ; the boundaries of science have been vastly extended, but not those of morality ; nor has one new duty

been added to those of the two tables he brought down from Sinai. A perfect code of morals, adapted to all ages, circumstances, and countries, time has neither altered nor added to the Ten Commandments.

The ten stones of the arch on which our domestic happiness, the purity of society, the security of life and property, and the prosperity of nations stand, it was these commandments the Son of God came from heaven, our substitute, to obey; with his blood, not to abrogate, but to enforce them; on his cross to exalt, not in his tomb to bury them; and, cementing the shattered arch with his precious blood, to lend to laws that had the highest authority of Sinai, the no less solemn and more affecting sanctions of Calvary.

As a legislator, besides moral, Moses established criminal and civil laws, which, unless in so far as they were specially adapted to the circumstances of the Israelites, our senators and magistrates would do well to copy. Inspired with the profoundest wisdom, they are patterns to all ages of equity and justice. For instance, how much kinder to the poor, and less burdensome to the community, than ours, are what may be called the "poor laws" of Moses! How much more wise than ours those that dealt with theft,—thus far that, requiring the thief to restore fourfold the value of what he had stolen, and work till he had done so, they assigned to that crime a punishment which at once secured reparation to the plundered and the reformation of the plunderer. Nor less wise, I may add, those sanitary laws of which, though long neglected, late years and bitter experience have been teaching us

the importance. It is only now, with all our boasted progress in arts and science, that we are awaking to the value of such regulations as, securing cleanliness in the habits and in the homes of the people, promote their health and preserve their lives. Anticipating the discoveries of the nineteenth century and the plans of our modern sanitary reformers, Moses was four thousand years ahead of his age. Judged, therefore, either by the civil or criminal code he enjoined, or by those Ten Commandments which lie at the foundation of all human justice, and shall continue the supreme standard of morals so long as time endures, Moses claims precedence over all the sovereigns, and senators, and legislators the world has seen.

As a *philosopher*, notwithstanding the audacious attacks now making on his narrative of the Creation, I venture to say that Moses, as he was first in the point of time, is the first in point of rank. He fills in the temple of science that high-priestly office his brother held in the temple of religion. How sublime, for example, his account of Creation compared with the monstrous fables and puerile conceits current among pagan nations! I know, indeed, no greater contrast than that between the childish, monstrous, and often immodest mythologies of India, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and those opening pages of the Book of Genesis, where God appears on the scene—calling creation into being by his simple but almighty word; establishing order amid unimaginable confusion; evoking light out of primeval darkness; assigning their different offices to the elements of earth and the shining orbs of heaven; building up the grand pyramid of

Nature, and on its lofty apex placing man, made in his own image, and enthroned lord of all. Believe some, and this is all a fancy, a mere fable. Foiled at every point, and on every occasion, where they employed history, and mental or moral science to attack the Christian faith, compelled also to acknowledge that the most formidable sceptics of other days, Hobbes and Voltaire, David Hume and Tom Paine,—without followers now save among the dregs of society,—were ignominiously defeated, the infidels of our day have changed their plan of attack. Obligated to seek new weapons, they are now attempting to overthrow the authority of Moses by the authority of physical science; and ever as some old bone, some fragment of ancient pottery, some stone ax or arrowhead turns up which they fancy will serve their purpose, there is great shouting in the camp of the Philistines, and fear seizes some that “the ark of God is taken.” A bone in Samson’s hand, the jawbone even of an ass, once did great execution; as did also the piece of pottery which a woman from the beleaguered wall pitched on the head of Abimelech, smiting him to the ground. But the enemies of our faith, though using similar weapons, have not achieved equal success. Looking at the future in the light of the past, we can only wonder at the timidity of those who fear these assaults, and at the credulity of such as, however fond of novelties, allow such crude and silly arguments to seduce them from the faith.

For example, a few years since a human jawbone was paraded before the world. It was said to have been dug out of a gravel-bed in France of so great

antiquity that the person to whom it belonged must have existed many thousand years antecedent to the period at which Moses places the first appearance of man on the earth. Well, this bone, whose vast age was to demolish the authority of the Bible, being sawn asunder, was examined: and with what result? Its internal condition demonstrated that, instead of being older than the age of Adam, it was but a few, even if a few, years older than those who were more the dupes of their own hatred to religion, than of the workmen that had stolen this fragment of mortality from a churchyard, and palmed it off on these credulous septs.

There is another and similar fact, much too instructive to be left in the oblivion to which mortified and defeated infidels would fain consign it. Years ago, a brick was found on the banks of the Nile, but many feet beneath their surface. These banks are formed of the slimy and fertile mud which each annual overflow deposits in the green valley of that famous river; and assuming—for all the theories opposed to Christianity are full of assumptions as the basis of their calculations—that these deposits have been of the same thickness, one year with another, from the most remote antiquity, such was the depth at which this brick was found, that it must have been made many thousand years before the time at which Moses fixes the creation of man. So infidels alleged and argued. How they told this in Gath, and published it in the streets of Ashkelon! With this brick they had inflicted a blow on the head of Moses, from which he could not possibly recover—with him not

"Babylon the Great," but the faith of Christendom had fallen. Well, the defenders of the faith were puzzled, and not a little perplexed. It was not easy to prove that the deposits of the Nile were irregular, and that the foundations, therefore, on which the attack rested were unsound. But, teaching us not to allow our confidence in the faith to be easily shaken by things which are at first, and even may continue, inexplicable, the problem was at length solved. The difficulty was finally and authoritatively removed. This famous brick fell into the hands of one familiar with the works of antiquity, and above all others expert in determining their age. He examined it ; and proved to demonstration that, however it got buried in the valley of the Nile, or whatever be the rate of increase in the river's alluvial deposits, that brick did not carry us back to ages antecedent to Mosaic history. It was of Roman manufacture, and belonged to an age no older than the Cæsars.

Christianity does not teach science, nor profess to teach it. It was for another and higher purpose that its pages were inspired. To serve its own proper and important end, it adapted its language to the times and the understandings of those it addressed. And though, in consequence of this, there were statements in the Bible which could not be reconciled with the modern discoveries of science, these should not have the weight of a feather against the historical, the external and internal, the miraculous and prophetic evidences on which its divinity stands, and has stood unshaken the assaults of two thousand years.

But, in truth, the greater the progress of science,

the more manifest is the harmony between its revelations and those of the Word of God.

For instance, Moses represents the earth as having been, antecedent to the present epoch, *without form and void*—an expression denoting a state of extreme and violent confusion, of death, and drear desolation. And how is his statement, not confuted, but corroborated by the remarkable discoveries of the nineteenth century? The very same story is written on the rocks, which we read in the book of Genesis. The solid strata above which we walk, build our houses, and reap our harvests, have been explored by the lights of science; and in their strange contortions, irregularities, and confusion, and those remains of innumerable and extinct creatures, that retaining the postures of a violent and sudden death, have been entombed within their stony sepulchres, they present a most remarkable commentary on Holy Writ.

Again in the last days, according to St. Peter, there were scoffers to arise, asserting “that all things remain as they were from the beginning of the creation.” So said David Hume; and so still say those who, in opposition to Moses and to the miracles of Scripture, take their stand on the uniform successions and invariable operations of the laws of Nature. But here the philosopher’s geology and our theology are at one. The most novel discoveries of our age are in harmony with the oldest statements of revelation. They prove that there have been no such invariable operations as would exclude the possibility or probability of miracles. They demonstrate what Moses asserts,

that all things have not remained as they were from the beginning. They show causes even now at work sufficient in the course of time to bring about the grand catastrophe that, with a God in judgment and a world in flames, shall usher in a new era—"the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Again, the Bible teaches us that the world is "reserved unto fire," and what it long ages ago revealed, is the conclusion to which the discoveries of science are now tending. In proof of that, see what one of our greatest modern philosophers, who has certainly never stood forth as a defender of the faith, says. He maintains that through the agency of volcanoes and other active causes, "the foundations of our earth shall be so weakened, that its crust, shaken and rent by reiterated convulsions, must in the course of time fall in." "When we consider," says Sir Charles Lyell, "the combustible nature of the elements of the earth: the facility with which their compounds may be decomposed and enter into new combinations: the quantity of heat which they evolve during these processes: when we recollect the expansive power of steam, and that water itself is composed of two gases which, by their union, produce intense heat; when we call to mind the number of explosive and detonating compounds, which have been already discovered; we may be allowed to share the astonishment of Pliny, that a single day should pass without a general conflagration: *Excedit profecto, omnia miracula, ullum diem fuisse, quo non sancta conflagrarent.*"

Again, and to take one other example from

Moses' account of the Creation, he represents light as having been formed before the sun was hung in heaven to rule the day, or the moon to rule the night. According to him, ere day or night was, God sent forth the *fat*, "Let there be light, and there was light." And taking their stand on an apparent impossibility, infidels have challenged the soundness of his philosophy; asking in tones of undisguised triumph, How could there be light before, and without, the sun? Well, this was a difficulty. Satisfied on other and impregnable grounds of the truth of the sacred narrative, Christians felt confident that the objection admitted of an answer; but till science came to the rescue, such answers as they attempted were more ingenious than satisfactory. The difficulty, however, has vanished; and Moses' account, no longer a subject for cavilling, is found to be in perfect harmony with the discoveries and the doctrines of modern science. Inspired of God, he anticipated our tardy discoveries. Relating that light was created before the sun appeared, he represents it as an element existing independently of that luminary. And so it does. This is now all but universally admitted—light being regarded as the effect of the undulations of an ether which, infinitely subtle and elastic, pervades all space, and finds but exciting causes in electricity and combustion, the sun and stars.

In taking leave of Moses as a philosopher, I have one more remark to make—one inexplicable, unless he were inspired. It was thousands of years before the telescope was invented and Galileo had turned it on the starry heavens, before Newton

had discovered the laws of gravitation, before anatomists had studied the structure of a fossil bone, before geologists had explored the bowels and strata of our earth; it was long ages, in fact, before true science was born, that Moses lifted the veil from the mysteries of Creation—stating facts in regard to its order, and laws, and phenomena, that are in perfect harmony with the greatest discoveries of our day. Surely, as he was the first, he is the greatest of philosophers; as well the greatest Philosopher as the greatest Writer, Divine, Leader, and Lawgiver, the world has seen.

✓ Let us now regard him as a *patriot*. There are those who do not believe in patriotism; treating it as some of our popular novelists, whose works are appropriately called "works of fiction," do religion. Unable to understand religion, they can only caricature it. Whenever any of their characters, man or woman, is introduced as using the language of piety, or as belonging to what, borrowing an expression from the ribald words of Robert Burns, they call the *unco gude*, that person they invariably represent as either a fool or a hypocrite, weak or wicked. If their defence is, that they, painting from life, have described religious people as they found them, we might reply they had been very unfortunate in their company; and that, as was likely to happen with men of their type, they must have been much more familiar with the dross than the gold of religious society. But their bad opinion of such as make a marked profession of piety may be otherwise accounted for. "Thou thoughtest," says God to the wicked, "that I was altogether such an one as thyself:"

and feeling, with minds at enmity with God and averse from the practice of holiness and virtue, that they themselves should be hypocrites were they to assume a strict profession, they judge others by themselves. Nor are they singular in the use of so false a standard. Profligates and libertines do not believe in the existence of virtue—regarding it in others as a mere pretence, nothing else than the paint which hides the blotches on the face of vice. Neither do thieves, I may observe, believe in honesty. Nor do selfish men believe in generosity. Many politicians, the heads or tools of parties, though not steeped in such corruption as that minister of the last century who boasted that he knew the price of every member of the House of Commons, have only sought their own aggrandisement, when they talked loudest of their country, its liberties, its honor, and its interests. And no wonder that men without a spark of patriotism in their own breasts should doubt its existence in others!

Presenting a noble contrast to the proverb long common in Italy, *Dolce far niente*—"It is sweet to indulge in idleness," the old Roman sang, *Dulce et decorum pro patria mori*—"It is sweet and graceful to die for one's country;" and one of these old Romans is said, when it was only by such a sacrifice that Rome could be spared, to have rode out of its gates full armed in sight of weeping thousands, and taking brave farewell of brothers, friends, and countrymen, to have spurred his steed into the gulf that closed its monstrous jaws on horse and rider. The lofty patriotism of the poet may be only the sentimentalism of song, and the hero of

the gulf only such a fable as adorns traditionary lore. But Moses was a patriot of that type.

How we extolled the conduct of the Americans in China, when, though not bound to mingle in the bloody fray, they felt it impossible to look on mere spectators, where our flag was flying, and our guns were flashing, and our men were falling amid the smoke of battle? Hoisting their anchors, and spreading sail, they took their places beside us, saying, "Blood is thicker than water!" It was in such another act that Moses' patriotism first burst out into flame. Neither his rank as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter and probable successor to her father's throne, nor his education as a prince of Egypt, nor the pride, and pomp, and pleasures of a palace had made him ashamed of his race, so indifferent to their cruel sufferings. His brave mother, in her assumed character of a nurse, had probably told her boy the story of his people, and of their wrongs; swearing him to fidelity, and sowing in his young heart the seeds of that piety and patriotism which afterwards determined his choice. Though apparently dormant for forty years, as has happened in cases of conversion, the seed a mother's hand sowed at length sprang up. He began to feel and take a deep interest in his people. Their sufferings haunted his pillow by night, and engaged his anxious thoughts by day. The fire, so to speak, was laid; and it needed but a spark, the touch of a match, to kindle it—a purpose served by a sight he one day happened to see. Concealing his object, he had gone "out to his brethren to look on their burdens," when it chanced that an Egyptian was smiting a Hebrew. He looked. He

felt every blow that fell on the poor, crouching slave. The fated hour had come. Plucking off the mask which had for a while concealed his secret, he flung himself into the fray; and, bestriding his prostrate compatriot, with flashing eye faced the Egyptian, and smote him dead. Life he risks; safety, riches, honors, rank, and perhaps a crown he casts away—all to right the wrongs of a bleeding wretch, in whom his piety recognized a child of God, and his patriotism a countryman and a brother. In the words of St. Paul, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."

This, if it could not be called his early, was now his only choice. Unlike many who, yielding to the generous impulses of youth, espouse the cause of the wronged, and fight their first battles under the flag of liberty, but in maturer years, or old age, live to desert it, Moses, henceforth, never swerved from the good part he had chosen. He pursued it onward to his grave with a pure, unselfish patriotism no time could weaken, nor injustice and ingratitude cool. If ever man was tempted to abandon a cause which he had undertaken, it was he. Why should he have entered on it, and left his happy household, and the quiet hills of Midian, to cast himself into a sea of troubles? Other actors have been hissed from the stage where they were once applauded; other benefactors have had to complain of public ingratitude; and under

the impulse of a temporary madness, other nations have brought their truest patriots to the scaffold. But for forty long years what reward, else than abuse, murmurs, opposition, unjust suspicion, and repeated attempts on his life, did Moses receive from those for whom he had rejected the most splendid offers, on whose behalf he had made the costliest sacrifices? If patriotism is to be measured not only by the wrongs it bears, but by the sacrifices it makes, he stands far ahead of all whose deeds grateful nations have commemorated in monumental marble, or poets have enshrined in song.

Take for example the unselfish, for its generosity and self-denial the matchless, part he acted at Sinai, when the idolatry of Israel had awoke all the terrors of the Mount, and God himself, provoked beyond all patience, was about to descend—to sweep man, woman, and child from the face of the earth. “Let me alone,” said Jehovah, addressing Moses, who, forgetting the wrongs he had suffered at their hands, had thrown himself between the people and an angry God, “Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them”—nor was that all: “And I,” he added, “will make of thee a great nation.” A splendid offer! Yet one which, not on this only, but also on another occasion, Moses declined; turning twice from a crown to fall on his knees, and pour out his whole soul to God in earnest prayers for the guilty people. He did more—far more. Deeply as he abhorred their conduct towards Jehovah; keenly as he felt their ingratitude to himself, he returned from their camp to tell God that he could not, and did not wish to, outlive

them. "Oh, this people," he cried, "have sinned a great sin, and have made their gods of gold; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin!" But what if God will not?—then with such patriotism as, with the exception of Paul's, never burnt in human bosom, or burst from human lips, he exclaimed: "If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book!" I will sink or swim with my people! If they are to perish, let me not live to see it.

It is no disparagement to Moses' patriotism that we are told that he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward." For what is that but in other words to say, that he walked by faith and not by sight: and, sacrificing a present for a much greater, though future, benefit, trode the path by which all goodness and greatness are attained. The ardent student who, stealing hours from sleep, bends his pallid face and lofty brow over the midnight lamp, and spends the time others give to youthful follies in holding converse with the mighty dead, is in the honors and laurels that crown such toils looking for a recompense of reward. The soldier who leaves home for a foreign shore to hold his weary watch, while brothers and sisters are locked in the sweet arms of slumber; who, while plenty loads their table, endures hunger and thirst, and cold and nakedness; who carries his colors into the smoke of battle, or plants them on the summit of the deadly breach, is also, in the fame or fortune that reward such heroism, looking for a recompense of reward. Thus likewise do thousands who, to enjoy ease and a competency in the evening of their days, practise a rigid economy, denying themselves pleasures in which many others

Man, unlike the lower animals whose eyes are naturally bent on the ground, with his noble and upright form, is made to look upwards and forwards; and there the student, the soldier, the prudent man of business, looking beyond the present hour, apply to worldly matters the very principle that in the region of spiritual things raises a child of God above the world, and leads him to look beyond it. To what but to their allowing the present to dominate over the future, is the ruin of sinners in almost every instance to be traced? They sacrifice, to the gratification of a moment or an hour, their peace, their conscience, their purity, their souls, with a folly far beyond his who, selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, said: "Behold! I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright be to me?" Would to God men somewhat changed Esau's question, and put it thus:—"When I am at the point to die, what profit shall this pleasure yield to me? It looks charming now, how will it look then? It is pleasant to anticipate; how will it bear reflection—another day, on another bed, in the hour of death, at the bar of judgment?"

The pity is that men will not have regard to "the recompense of the reward," and allow themselves to be influenced—for both man and God act from motives—by high and holy motives. Our Lord himself, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame. Nor does it detract from Moses' piety and patriotism that, instead of acting from blind and ordinary impulses, he had regard to the "recompense of the reward."

Nothing could be further removed from selfishness than the ends he aimed at, and the reward he

looked for. His was not the spirit of such as are deterred from gross sins only by the fear of hell ; who discover nothing in heaven to desire but the refuge it offers, nor in Jesus to love but the crown He bestows. Devoutest of men, he aimed at the glory of God ; purest of patriots, he forgot his own interests in those of his people. These, the divine glory and the good of Israel, were his aims, and their attainment his sufficient reward—his motives as unselfish as the man's who leaps into the boiling flood to save a drowning child ; and whose reward is, not the plaudits of the crowd that watch him from the banks, as, buffeting the torrent with one hand, and holding up the dripping infant in the other, he regains the shore, but the satisfaction of having saved the perishing, and of seeing the mother, whose thanks he waits not to receive, clasping her living boy to her beating breast.

But a right estimate of Moses' patriotism cannot be formed unless we take into account the circumstances in which he was reared. These were not less unfavorable to this virtue than are the gloom and foul vapors of a charnel-house to the growth and fragrance of a flower. It is not from castles so much as cabins, from princes so much as from among the people, that reformers and patriots spring. Luther came out of a miner's hut ; and while the German boy sang in the streets for his bread, John Knox earned his by teaching. Wallace and William Tell, Hampden and George Washington embarked in the cause of freedom with little else but their lives to lose. The noblest sacrifices of piety and patriotism have been made by such as have not a drop of noble blood in their

veins. Few histories are more illustrative of that fact than Scotland's. Many of her nobles signed the Solemn League and Covenant, but with a very few, though illustrious, exceptions, it was her middle-classes and peasantry who suffered for it. It was their blood that dyed her scaffolds, and their strong arms that kept the banners flying on her moors and mountains; and it was they who, hoping against hope, never sheathed their swords till the tyrant fled, and those liberties, civil and sacred, were secured which have made our country the boast of Britons and envy of the world.

It is not commonly—and this makes Moses' case the more remarkable—from among the enervating influences of wealth, and ease, and luxury, that men come forth to do grand things. It is with them as with birds. Those birds soar the highest that have had the hardest upbringing. Warm and soft the pretty nest where, under the covering of her wings, amid green leaves and golden tassels and the perfume of flowers, the mother-bird of sweet voice, but short and feeble flight, rears her tender brood. Not thus are eagles reared, as I have seen on scaling a dizzy crag. There, their cradle an open shelf, their nest a few rough sticks spread on the naked rock, the bright-eyed eaglets sat exposed to the rains that seamed the hill-sides, and every blast that howled through the glen. Such the hard nursing of birds that were thereafter to soar in sunny skies, or with strong wings cleave the clouds and ride upon the storm! Even so, I thought, God usually nurses those amid difficulties and hardships who are destined to rise to eminence, and accomplish great deeds on earth.

Hence says Solomon, "It is good for man to bear the yoke in his youth."

Hence, because he had had no such yoke to bear, the more honor to Moses, the more illustrious his patriotism. Bred in a palace, he espoused the cause of the people : nursed on the lap of luxury, he embraced adversity : reared in a school of despots, he became the brave champion of liberty : long associated with oppressors, he took the side of the oppressed : educated as her son, he forfeited the favor of a princess to maintain the rights of the poor : with a crown in prospect, he had the magnanimity to choose a cross ; and for the sake of his God and Israel, abandoned ease, refinement, luxuries, and the highest earthly honors, to be a houseless wanderer ; "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," and "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

That decision was as pious as patriotic ; and in Moses' piety, let it be observed, we have that which was the true support and backbone of his patriotism. Nor in that did his case present, though an illustrious, a singular conjunction. Religious men have ever proved the truest patriots. The cause of freedom has owed more to them than to any other class. They have ever fought best and bravest in their country's battles who sought another one ; and strong in faith, at peace with God, and sustained by the hopes of immortality, were careless whether, as one of our martyrs expressed it, they rotted in the earth or in the air : died amid holy prayers, or the shouts of battle

and the roar of cannon. The greatest patriots of our own country were not its worldlings, its profligates, its sceptics ; but devout and holy men—men who slept with their Bibles as well as pistols by their pillow ; who carried the sacred volume to battle in their bosoms as well as in their hearts ; and whose tombstones, venerated by a pious peasantry, still stand on our moors and mountains, marked by the appropriate symbols of an open Bible and a naked sword. But never was the connection between true piety and true patriotism so eminently illustrated as in the case of Moses. He abandoned all worldly interests for those of religion and of his race. He preferred the reproach of Christ to the riches of Egypt. Though thereby claiming kindred with a race of slaves, he counted it a higher honor to be a child of Abraham than reckoned the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He gallantly embarked in the cause of his brethren, resolved to sink or swim with them. Type of our divine Redeemer, he bore much for them, and bore also much from them. Offering the highest pattern of patriotism sustained by piety, with what meekness he met their insolence ; with what patience their provocations ; with what forgiveness their unparalleled ingratitude and oft-repeated attempts upon his life !—and when God, provoked to cast them off, offered to make of him a great nation, with what noble generosity did he intercede on their behalf, refusing to build his own house on the ruins of theirs !

From him we may learn how to be patriots ; and how patriotism, like all other virtues, has its true root in piety. He did not miss the recom

pense of reward. He enjoys its heaven. He had it on earth—accomplishing the grand object of his life, when, with victory and thanksgiving on his lips, his last gaze, ere he ascended to the heavenly Canaan, was fixed in dying raptures on the promised land; and though no nation with the tears of bitter grief and the pomp of public funeral followed their great leader to his grave, he was buried with higher honors—as some poet thus finely sings :

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
 On this side Jordan's wave,
 In a vale in the land of Moab,
 There lies a lonely grave.
 And no man dug the sepulchre,
 And no man gave it air,
 For the angels of God upturned the sod,
 And laid the dead man there.

That was the grandest funeral
 That ever passed on earth,
 But no man heard the tramping
 Or saw the train go forth.
 For without sound of music,
 Or voice of them that wept,
 Silently down from the mountain's crown
 The great procession went.

Perchance the bald old eagle,
 On gray Bethpeor's height,
 Out of his rocky eyerie,
 Looked on the wondrous sight.
 Perchance the lion stalking
 Stills shuns that hallowed spot,
 For beast and bird have seen and heard
 That which man knoweth not.

But when the warrior dieth,
 His comrades in the war,
 With arms reversed and muffled drum,
 Follow the funeral car.

**They show the banners taken,
They tell his battles won :
And after him lead his masterless steed,
While peals the minute-gun.**

**Amid the noblest of the land
Men lay the sage to rest,
And give the bard an honored place,
With costly marbles drest.
In the great Minster transept
Where lights like glories fall,
And the choir sings, and the organ rings
Along the emblazoned wall.**

**This was the bravest warrior
That ever buckled sword,
This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word.
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.**

**And had he not high honors—
The hill-side for his pall,
To lie in state while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall ;
And the dark rock pines with tossing plumes
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that mountain land
To lay him in the grave ?**

**In that deep grave without a name,
Whence his uncoffined clay
Shall break again—most wondrous thought—
Before the Judgment-day ;
And stand with glory wrapped around
On the hills he never trode,
And speak of the strife that won our life
With the incarnate Son of God.**

Oh, lonely tomb in Moab's land !
Oh, dark Bethpeor's hill !
Speak to these anxious hearts of ours
And teach them to be still.
God hath his mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell ;
He hides them deep like the secret sleep
Of him He loved so well.

Joshua the Colonist.

WHETHER descending from the snowy Alps, where flowers bloom on its margin, to melt away before the summer heat, and pour from its icy tavern a turbid, roaring torrent, or descending through the drear desolation of Arctic regions to topple over the sea-cliff, and form the icebergs, the dread of mariners, that come floating like glittering castles and cathedrals, into southern seas, the glacier is a river of ice—not of fluid but of solid water. Tossed into waves of many a fantastic form, and cracked with fissures that gape to swallow up the unwary traveller and bury him in their profound blue depths, this remarkable object, as may be seen in the Mer de Glace, possesses a wonderfully firm texture. Its ice rings to a blow; yet it climbs up slopes, turns the edge of opposing rocks, forces its way through narrow gorges, and, accommodating itself to the curves of the valley, advances with a slow but regular rate of progress. How this vast, continuous mass of ice, many miles in length and hundreds of feet in thickness, is displaced, and thrust forward and downward into the plains, was long, but is no longer, a mystery. It happens thus. Each succeeding winter covers the mountain-tops with fresh accumulations of snow. These, with their enormous

weight pressing from above and behind on the partially plastic glacier which the frost forms out of their snow, force it from its birth-place to seek room elsewhere. It descends; it melts; and, changed into flowing streams, carries beauty to smiling valleys, and fertility to far distant plains.

By an analogous process, men, who naturally cling to their birth-place, and often, like trees that spread their roots on a naked rock, cling to it the closer the poorer it is, are constrained to obey the original command of God, and even against their will, "replenish the earth." Those Alpine valleys which have furnished us with a figure, furnish a remarkable example of that fact. Walled in by stupendous mountains, whose heads are crowned with eternal snows, and whose precipitous sides afford little else than footing for pines and food for wild goats, it is a very limited number of families they are able to support. Supplying to their stated inhabitants but the bare necessities of life, they afford no room for increase of population. In consequence of this, as the birth exceeds the death rate, and numbers hereby accumulate, their pressure, like that of the snows on the glacier, forces the population outwards; compelling them, though with bleeding hearts and tender memories of their dear mountain-home, to seek relief in emigration—room and bread elsewhere. Hence, whether born in Swiss or Italian valleys, natives of the Alps are met with over the whole continent. The ignorant and indolent of Roman Catholic cantons go forth to recruit the armies of despots and of the Pope; while on the other hand, those from Protestant territories are found pursuing in

hereditary trades the arts of industry in the chief cities of Europe, and even on the distant shores of the Atlantic.

The pressure of population on the ordinary means of subsistence is as much felt in a small country hemmed in by the sea, as in one hemmed in by mountains. Unlike trees whose bark expands with their growth, the people cooped up in such a country are like a man sheathed in unelastic, iron armor. Destitute of energy, they remain at home, almost always on the borders, and frequently suffering the horrors, of famine. Educated and enterprising, they seek an outlet. They go abroad ; and encountering alike the dangers of the sea and the hardships of the emigrant, they may be found in huts scattered on foreign and savage shores laying the foundations of future commonwealths.

The latter is the part which seems to be specially assigned in the providence of God to our country and our countrymen. Carrying with us the love of liberty, literature, and science, the useful and also ornamental arts, and above all that Word of God which bringeth salvation, one of the brightest prospects in the future of our world is that Britons, forced by the increase of population and the narrow limits of their island-home to seek new settlements on other shores, shall be more than any other the chosen race to fulfil the command of Eden, and multiplying, "replenish the earth." With the energy of the old Scandinavians in our blood, with a resolution that delights to encounter difficulties, with a courage that is inflamed, not quenched, by dangers, with our ships ploughing

every sea and our commerce connecting us with every shore, to us more than to any other Christian nation, God seems to commit the interests of humanity and the Kingdom of his Son ; saying, as to Israel of old, Go ye in and possess the land ; saying, as to the first disciples, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ! A noble destiny this !—the chief purpose, perhaps, for which, though occupying a small, remote, and stormy isle, we have grown into a mighty people, and fill a place in the world vastly greater than that which our island fills on its map. Great colonists as we are, and greater as, with the growth of our wealth and therefore of our population, we are likely to be, it may prove instructive and also interesting to look at Joshua in the character of a colonist—the leader of the largest band that ever left their old in search of a new home. The emigration which he succeeded Moses in conducting to a happy issue was divinely directed, as well as divinely appointed ; and from it our country may gather lessons of the greatest importance, if not indeed essential to the right fulfilment of its splendid and holy destiny.

I remark, then, that the colonization of Canaan under Joshua was conducted in an orderly manner, on a large scale, and in a way eminently favorable to the happiness of the emigrants and the interests of virtue and religion.

We cannot say the same of ours. Certainly not. Our system of emigration rends asunder the dearest ties of nature, removing from the side of aged parents those who should tend and support them. It carries away the very flower of our youth ; the

enterprising ; the stout-hearted, and the strong-handed ; and so leaves the old country burdened with an undue proportion of such as are feeble and infirm. Our manner of emigration is attended with still worse, because most immoral effects. The largest proportion of such as seek a home in other lands being young men, there are too many women at home, and too many men abroad. The equality of the sexes is disturbed. God's virtuous order is thrown into confusion ; and the consequences, both to the old country and its colonies, are immoral, eminently pernicious.

It was after another fashion that God managed the emigration of the Hebrews under Moses and Joshua. It presents us with a model we would do well to copy. The children of Israel entered Canaan to be settled within allotted borders ; by families and by tribes. In their case emigration was thus less a change of persons than a change, and a happy change of place. No broad seas rolled between the severed members of the same family ; there were no bitter partings of parents and the children they feared never more to see ; nor did the emigrants, with sad faces and swimming eyes, stand crowded on the ship's stern to watch the blue mountains of their dear native land as they sank beneath the wave. Now, were our emigrations conducted somewhat after this divine model, the trees, the birds, the flowers, the skies might differ from those of the old country, but with the same loved faces before them, the same loved voices in their ear, the same loved forms moving about the house, the same neighbors to associate and intermarry with, to rally round them

in danger, to sit at their festive board, and at length carry their coffin to the grave, our emigrants would feel their new quarters to be *home*; and remember almost without a pang, since they had brought away with them those who most endeared it, the glen or valley, the city or village of their birth. See many of our colonists separated by broad seas from all they loved; strangers to one another; dwelling far apart; scattered on the lonely prairie or buried in the depths of gloomy forests; doomed to rough work and learning rougher manners; sighing for their old homes, the amenities of civilized and the sweet pleasures of domestic life! How enviable compared to theirs the circumstances of the Hebrews on the other side of Jordan, amid the swelling hills and green valleys of their adopted land! Every homestead presents a picture of virtuous, domestic life. The aged parents, regarded with reverence and supported with cheerfulness, sit shadowed by vine and fig-tree; while the father, leaving his plough in the furrow or leading his flock homeward at the close of day, is met by a merry band of children to conduct him to a home where a bright wife stands at the door with smiles of welcome on her face, one infant in her arms and another at her knee.

A still more important lesson than that taught by the orderly, just, humane, and happy arrangements of this Hebrew colony, is taught us by the care Joshua took of its religious interests. These, the greatest, yet considered apparently the least, of all interests, are sadly neglected in many of our foreign stations; and I have often wondered

to see with what little reluctance Christian parents could send their children away to lands where more lost their religion than made their fortune. Alas! for many of our emigrants—not scapegraces, but youths of fair and lovely promise—with none to care for their souls! The world engrosses all their care. No holy Sabbath renews each week impressions that were fading away. Seldom visited by any minister of the Gospel, far remote from the sound of the church-going bell, they grow indifferent to the claims of religion; apathy steals over them like a creeping palsy; and disgracing the very name of Christian, many addict themselves to vices which make even the heathen blush. Condemn the Canaanities for offering their children up to Moloch!—equally cruel and costly, and far more guilty, are the sacrifices some parents make of theirs to Mammon. Talk of the Old Testament being out of date!—it were well for our countrymen, and the world over so many of whose shores our colonies are planted, if we copied the lessons of that divine old book. Whatever we do with our religion, the Hebrews did not leave the ark of God behind them. Regarding it as at once their glory and defence, they followed it into the bed of Jordan, and, passing the flood on foot, bore it with them into the adopted land. Wherever they pitched their tents, they set up the altar and tabernacle of their God. Priests and teachers formed part of the train; and making ample provision for the regular ministration of word and ordinance, they laid in holy and pious institutions the foundations of their future Commonwealth. Here is an example to us. Our surplus population

must of necessity emigrate. We are furnished in God's good providence with remarkable facilities for carrying the blessings of civilization and a pure gospel to the ends of the earth; I know no grander scheme for our country and its Christian patriots than a colonization formed to the utmost possible extent, in all its orderly arrangements, and family relationships, and religious provisions, on the model of that which Israel followed in the land of Canaan. We have attempted it in the New Zealand settlements of Canterbury and Otago on a small and imperfect scale. But it were as much to our own interest as to the good of mankind, that we tried it on a scale corresponding to our means, and the world's clamant necessities. Such colonies would relieve the old country, and bless the new; and these, unlike the melancholy ruins of ancient kingdoms, depopulated regions, and the graves of extinct and exterminated tribes, were worthy footmarks for us to leave on the sands of time and the soil of heathen shores.

Such are some of the points in which Joshua is to be admired, and imitated, as a model colonist. Alas! while neglecting his example in things worthy of imitation, we have followed it but too closely in the one thing where it affords us no precedent to follow. I refer to the fire and sword he carried into the land of Canaan, and his extermination of its original inhabitants. We have too faithfully followed him in this—with no warrant, human or divine, to do so. Let me explain the matter.

The day of Jericho's doom has come. To the amazement first, and afterwards, no doubt, to the

amusement of its inhabitants, the host of Israel, followed by the ark of God and priests with sounding horns, have walked on six successive days the round of its walls. Its inhabitants crowding the ramparts have probably made merry with the Hebrews—asking, as they passed, if they expected to throw down stone walls with rams’ horns instead of battering rams? and whether they had not had walking enough in the wilderness these past forty years, that they were taking this daily and very harmless turn round their city? With such gibes and mockery the six days passed on; but now the seventh, the Sabbath of the Lord, had come—and with it an end of their mirth, and of Jericho itself. Smitten, when the people shouted and the trumpets blew, as by the blast of a mine or the shock of an earthquake, its walls were to fall flat to the ground, and lay it open to the assault. And in view of that event, these were Joshua’s instructions: “The city shall be accursed, it and all therein, to the Lord; only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house.” And committing no mistake as to the full and bloody import of this order, the people, it is said, “utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old. Nor was the slaughter at the sack of Ai, conducted also under Joshua’s orders, less indiscriminating and wholesale. There was not, we are told, a man or woman but was smitten with the edge of the sword, the king only excepted; and him—the last survivor of these stout heathens and of a miserable crowd of women and children—whom the people had taken alive and brought captive to Joshua,

Joshua carried to the smoking ruins of his home, and hanged on a tree. These are specimens of the policy which the Hebrews pursued in Canaan, killing all, without distinction of rank, or sex, or age. They went to the slaughter of the Canaanites as we should to the destruction of our sins—their eye did not pity and their hand did not spare.

We naturally recoil from such scenes; and taking advantage of that horror of bloodshed and of the sufferings of innocents which God has implanted in every breast, Tom Paine, and other ribald sceptics, have made this terrible extermination a ground for attacking the character of Joshua, and denying the divine authority of the Bible itself. The faith of some has staggered at this terrible wholesale slaughter. It has disturbed the minds of others; and it may be well to take this opportunity of showing that, severe as the judgment was, it affords no ground whatever either for traducing the character of Joshua or doubting the divinity of Scripture.

There have been monsters who delighted in cruelty, and found music in the groans of sufferers—popish inquisitors and persecutors, a sort of fiends wearing ecclesiastical habits and the human form, who gloated their eyes with tender maidens writhing on the rack,—ruthless conquerors, who put all, without distinction, to the sword, as deaf to the cries of mothers and the wails of infants as the steel they buried in their bowels. Joshua did exterminate the Canaanites; but he is not to be ranked with these. The kindly terms which he uses to Achan, as, bending with pity over the guilty man, he calls him “my son”—the high

honor he displayed in keeping faith with the Gibeonites, who had so cleverly entrapped him—the dauntless courage which he carried into battle, with which he faced the Israelites when, maddened on one occasion to fury, they sought his life, and with which also when alone, by the walls of Jericho, on seeing the Lord of Hosts, in form of a man standing across his path with a sword drawn in his hand, he went up to Him with the brave challenge, “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?”—the piety which raises man above all low and brutal passions, and ever softens the heart it sanctifies; these noble features in Joshua’s character are incompatible with a temper that could find pleasure in the infliction of suffering, or delight in scenes of blood. It is not the pious, but the impious—not honorable men, but knaves—not the brave, but cowards, that are cruel. The judge is not cruel who condemns a criminal; and, placed in similar circumstances, no doubt Joshua, brave, gentle, and generous, was often agitated by the emotions of him who, seated on yonder bench of justice, with swimming eyes, and voice his rising feelings choke, pronounces on some pale, trembling wretch the dreadful doom of death.

In his bloodiest work Joshua was acting under commission. His orders were clear, however terrible they read. These are his instructions, as given by God to Moses:—“When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, sever

nations greater and mightier than thou ; and when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them : neither shalt thou make marriages with them ; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son"—a terrible sentence clenched with this weighty reason, "for they will turn away thy sons from following me, that they may serve other gods : so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly." There, God undertakes the whole responsibility. And be it observed that the children of Israel were blamed not because they did, but because they did not, exterminate the Canaanites,—slaying them with the sword, or driving them out of the land. The duty was painful and stern ; but they lived to find, as God had warned them would happen to them, and as happens to us when we spare the sins of which these heathen were the type, that mercy to the Canaanites was cruelty to themselves.

But, admitting that the responsibility is shifted from Joshua to God, how, it may be asked, are the sufferings of the Canaanites, their expulsion and bloody extermination from the land, to be reconciled with the character of God, as just, and good, and righteous ? This is like many other of his acts. On attempting to scrutinize them, mystery meets us on the threshold. No wonder !—when we feel constrained to exclaim even over a flake of snow, the spore of a fern, the leaf of a tree, the change of a base grub into a winged and painted butterfly, "Who can by searching find out God !

who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is higher than heaven, what can we do? deeper than hell, what can we know? the measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea." Dark as the judgment on Canaan seems, a little consideration will show that it is no greater, nor so great, a mystery as many others in the providence of God.

The land of Canaan was his—"the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." And I ask in turn, is the Sovereign Proprietor of all to be denied the right that ordinary proprietors claim—the right to remove one set of tenants, and replace them by another? Besides, the inhabitants of Canaan were not only, so to speak, "tenants at will," but tenants of the worst description. They practised the grossest immoralities; even their religious rites were obscene. Cruel, sensual, devilish, they were sinners beyond other men; a curse to the world which they corrupted with their vices, and burdened with a load of guilt. And, therefore, unless we refuse to God the right we grant to inferior proprietors—that of doing what they will with their own, and the right also we grant to inferior governors—that of inflicting punishment on crime, God possessed an absolute and perfect authority, not only to remove, but to exterminate these idolaters out of the land, saying, "Thou shalt smite and utterly destroy them." Let it be remarked also, that the Canaanites not only deserved, but chose their fate. The fame of what God had done for the tribes of Israel had preceded their arrival in the land of Canaan. Thus, its guilty tenants were early warned; got

“notice to quit ;” might be considered as summoned out. They refused to go. They chose the chances of resistance rather than quiet removal ; and so,—for be it observed that the Israelites in the first instance were only ordered to cast them out,—they brought destruction on themselves, with their own hands pulling down the house that buried them and their children in its ruins.

But the children? the unoffending infants? There is a mystery, I admit, an awful mystery in their destruction ; but no new or greater mystery here than meets us everywhere else. The mystery of offspring who suffer through their parents’ sins is repeated daily in our own streets. Look at that poor child, shivering in the winter cold, rags on its back and cruel hunger in its hollow cheek, reared in deepest ignorance and driven into crime, doomed to a life of infamy and of misery,—it suffers, the hapless victim of a father’s drunkenness. Look at this wasted, withered, sallow infant, that is pining away to death and the mercy of the grave, with its little head wearily laid on the foul shoulders of one who has lost, with the heart, almost the features, of her sex,—it suffers through a mother’s sins. Sanitary reformers tell us, and tell us truly, that thousands of children die year by year in consequence of the foul habits and foul habitations of improvident and careless parents ; and history tells us that not thousands but millions who did not know their right hand from their left, have fallen victims to wars and conflagrations, to earthquakes and famines, to plagues and pestilences. It does not alter the case one whit to say that children who die of disease, for instance, die

by the laws of Nature, while those in Canaan were put to death by the command of God. This is a distinction without a difference; for what are the laws of Nature but the ordinances and will of God? If it is consistent with his righteous government to deprive an infant of life by the hand of disease, it is equally so to do it by the edge of the sword. And thus, while the death of a thousand children is not more mysterious than that of one, there is no more mystery in all the slaughtered babes of Canaan, than lies shrouded and shut up in the little coffin any sad father lays in an untimely grave. Nor is the cloud which here surrounds God's throne, dark as it seems, without a silver lining. There is mercy in the death of all infants—the Canaanites not excepted. I feel here as I have often felt when gazing on the form of a dead child in some foul haunt of wretchedness and vice. To die is to go to heaven. To have lived had been to inherit the misery and repeat the crimes of parents. The sword of the Hebrew opens to the babes of Canaan a happy escape from misery and sin—a sharp but short passage to a better and purer world.

Thus, and otherwise, we can justify the sternest deeds of which Joshua has been accused. He held a commission from God to enter Canaan, and cast out its guilty inhabitants, and, like a woodman who enters the forest axe in hand, to cut them down if they clung like trees to its soil. His conduct admits of the fullest vindication; and though it did not, we should be the last to accuse him. Ours are not the hands to cast a stone at Joshua. A most painful and shameful

history than the history of some at least of our colonies was never written. Talk of the extermination of the Canaanites! Where are the Indian tribes our settlers found roaming, in plumed and painted freedom, the forests of the New World? Excepting a few scattered, degraded savages, all have disappeared from the face of the earth. We found Tasmania with a native population; and lately the only survivors were a single woman and some dozen men. Unless where our emigrants are settled on its shores, or lonely shepherds tend their flocks, or the gold digger toils for the treasures in its bowels, the Australian continent is becoming a solitude; its aborigines disappearing before us with the strange animals that inhabit their forests and form their scanty food. Equally with the timid Bushmen and crouching Hottentot, the brave savages of New Zealand are vanishing before our vices, diseases, and fire-arms. Not more fatal to the Canaanites the irruption of the Hebrews than our arrival in almost every colony to its native population! We have seized their lands; and in a way less honorable, and even merciful, than the swords of Israel, have given them in return nothing but a grave. They have perished before our vices and diseases. Our presence has been their extermination; nor is it possible for a man with a heart to read many pages of our colonial history without feelings of deepest pity and burning indignation. They remind us of the sad but true words of Fowell Buxton. The darkest day, said that Christian philanthropist, for many a heathen tribe was that which first saw the white man step upon their shores. Instead of a blessing, we have carried

a blight with us. Professed followers of Him who came not to destroy but to save the world, we have entered the territories of the heathen with fire and sword; and adding murder to robbery, have spoiled the unoffending natives of their lives as well as of their lands.

Had we any commission to exterminate? Divine as Joshua's, our commission was as opposite to his as opposing poles to each other. These are its blessed terms, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Can our country and its churches read that without a blush of shame and a sense of guilt? Let us repent the errors of the past. Not so much to aggrandize our island, as to Christianize the world by our colonies, is the noble enterprise to which Providence calls us. Our sailors touch at every port; the keels of our ships plough every sea; our manufactures are borne to every shore; our settlements are scattered far and wide over the whole face of the globe; and year by year this busy hive throws off its swarms to take wing in search of new settlements and wider homes. With its literature and language, with its hereditary love of adventure and indomitable vigor, with its devotion to liberty, civil and sacred, with the truth preached from its pulpits, and Bibles issued by millions from its printing presses, our country seems called of Heaven to marshal the forces of the Cross on the borders of heathendom, and "go in to possess the land."

"Go ye in to possess the land,"—these, if I may

say so, were the marching orders under which Joshua and Israel entered Canaan ; and however unable they appeared, in point of numbers and ordinary resources, to cope with those who held the soil and were prepared to fight like men that had their homes and hearths, their wives and children to defend, yet then, as still, the measure of man's ability is God's command. While he denied them straw, Pharaoh required the Israelites to make bricks ; and other masters may impose on their servants orders equally unreasonable. But whatever God requires of us, God will give ability to do. Is it to repent and be converted ? is it to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved ? is it to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts ? is it to abstain from evil and do good ? is it to cast sin and depravity out of our hearts, like Canaanites out of the land ?—the fact that God has commanded us to do a thing proves that we can do it. So there is no Christian but may adopt the bold words of Paul, and say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Since it is so, what a noble career and rapid conquest were before the children of Israel ? Sweeping over Canaan like a resistless flood, they might have carried all before them. What difficulties could prove too great for those who had God to aid them ? What need had they of bridge, or boats, before whose feet the waters of Jordan fled ? of engines of war, whose shout, borne on the air, smote the ramparts of Jericho to the ground with an earthquake's reeling shock ? of allies, who had heaven on their side, to hurl down death from

the skies on their panic-stricken enemies? How could they lose the fruits of victory over the retreat of whose foes night refused to throw her mantle, while the sun held the sky, nor sunk in darkness, till their bloody work was done? What were natural difficulties, or disparity of numbers, to those who entered Canaan with the promise, "If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commands, and do them, your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time, and ye shall eat your bread unto the full, and dwell in your land safely; and ye shall chase your enemies; and they shall fall before you by the sword; and five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight!"

With these promises Israel crossed the flood on foot; yet after many years, and ample time allowed to exterminate all the Canaanites, we find God saying to Joshua, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." How true, and, alas! how sad, that these reproachful words admit of a wider than their original application; one involving on the part of Christ's Church deeper sin and greater shame! It is a long time ago, more than eighteen hundred years, since our Lord brought his Church into the world, and conducting her to the borders of heathenism, said, "Go ye in to possess the land; go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; go, and I will be with you; go, and I will never leave nor forsake you." His Church measures its existence not by years, but centuries. It has seen hundreds of generations swept into the

tomb. Save the changeless sea and perpetual hills, it has seen all things changed beneath the sun ; the religions of Egypt, and Greece, and Rome sink into the tide of time ; and every kingdom that flourished at its birth pass away from the face of the world. Venerable for its age, not less than for its truth, the Church of Christ has had time enough to plant the cross on every shore, and push its bloodless conquests into every land ; yet how may Jesus, pointing to a world by much the larger portion of which remains under the dominion of darkness and of the devil, address her, saying, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and yet there is much land to be possessed."

So gigantic is the missionary work which lies before the Church that the old words are still appropriate, "The field is the world." With exceptions hardly deserving notice, the whole continent of Asia, the whole continent of Africa, and, speaking of its original inhabitants, the whole continent of the New World, in other words, much the largest portion of the globe, is "land yet to be possessed." Eighteen centuries ago Christ charged his people to carry the tidings of salvation to the ends of the earth ; but thousands of millions have died, and hundreds of millions are living, who never heard his name. Was ever master so ill-served, or hard battle and noble victory, if I may say so, so defrauded of their fruits ?

Again, much of the world, though nominally Christian, is "land yet to be possessed."

By the use of different colors an ordinary map of the globe is made to present a view of the different kingdoms into which its surface is divided.

The same device has been applied to illustrate its religious as well as its political condition ; and when the map is spread out with all those countries which are not Christian shaded with the sombre colors that symbolize their moral and spiritual darkness, it is a black picture—one to make the Church of Christ hang her head with shame. Yet all outside these darkest spaces is not enjoying the light of a pure gospel. Outside them, there is much to do ; “ much land to be possessed.” The largest portion, indeed, of what is nominally Christian is under the dominion of one form or other of Antichrist. In the old land of Canaan, the places from which Jebusites, and Hittites, and others, were expelled, came to be occupied, in part at least, by the Samaritan race. These, though holding a portion of his creed, hated the Jew ; and often opposed him with an animosity more bitter than rankled in heathen breasts. And how has that condition of things found a counterpart in the so-called Christian world ? A corresponding mixture of truth and error characterizes the Greek and Roman Churches. Their animosity to the true faith has been seldom, if ever, exceeded by heathen rancor : nor has Pagan Rome persecuted the truth more bitterly than Popish Rome has done. And thus in many nominally Christian countries, where grovelling superstitions have usurped the place of piety, or infidelity, eating out the vitals of religion, has left nothing but an empty shell, the Church of Christ has a great work to do—very much land yet to be possessed.

Again, it is true even of our own native country that “ there is much land yet to be possessed.”

The eyes of a fool, says Solomon, are in the ends of the earth ; and however much we commend the zeal which has sent missionaries to the plains of India, the sands of Africa, and Greenland's icy shores, perhaps we lie somewhat open to that remark. In seeking to convert the heathen abroad, have we not too much overlooked the claims of those at home ; and, like unwise generals, pushed on our conquests, while leaving a formidable enemy in our rear ? In those vast, almost unbroken masses, ignorance and intemperance, whose rags and vices, whose neglect of religious ordinances and moral degradation, disgrace our country and Christian name, how much land is there yet to possess ? If we reckon how fast the non-church-going population of our large towns, and of many mining and manufacturing districts also, is increasing ; how many are sinking year by year into the godless mass that has abandoned the house of God, and cast off all profession of religion ; and how that rising flood of irreligion threatens at no distant period to engulf throne, and altar, and all to which our country owes its goodness and its greatness, what need is there to push on the work of Home as well as of Foreign Missions, and " enter in to possess the land !"

In addressing ourselves to this task, we might take a lesson from the manner in which the twelve tribes took possession of the land of Canaan. God divided it for them into twelve different sections. Giving to each tribe a part, He said, as it were, " This is your portion, fight for it ; while you help your brother, and your brother helps you, be this your sphere for work and warfare." Thus all

jealousy, envy, and discord were prevented; the only rivalry between one tribe and another being who should be foremost in the work—the first to cast the heathen out of their borders, and possess the land. Had no such plan been adopted, what had happened?—the tribes had fallen into quarrels; and those who fought with the Canaanites had probably fought with each other. And, I have thought, it were well did the Churches of Jesus Christ apportion out the heathen world; and well also if our different denominations, laying aside all haughty exclusiveness and mutual jealousies, were to divide the waste field at home. Then “Judah would no longer vex Ephraim, nor Ephraim envy Judah;” and the Church, acting in harmony, marching in concert throughout all its sections, would go forth to the conquest of the world, to use the grand words of the old prophet, “clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.”

Then, animated with one spirit, and aiming at one object, we might expect such success as blest her earliest days. What noble progress did she make when the dews of youth were on her? For one heathen converted now, hundreds were converted then. By her arms Rome subdued kingdoms, but the Church by the preaching of the Gospel subdued Rome herself. Nor oppression, nor exile, nor bloody scaffolds, nor fiery stakes, nor persecution in its most appalling forms, could arrest her triumphant career. She entered the temples of idolatry, smiting down their gods as with an iron mace; she forced her way through the guards of imperial palaces; she faced all danger; she overcame all opposition; and almost

before the last of the Apostles was called to his rest, she had made the name of Christ greater than Cæsar's—proclaiming the faith, and planting the cross in every region of the then known world. Wherever Roman commerce sailed, she followed in its wake ; wherever the Roman eagles flew, she was there, like a dove, bearing the olive branch of peace. A century or two more of such progress, such holy energy, such self-denying zeal, and, the Spirit of God continuing to bless the preaching of the Word, the whole land had been possessed—the earth had been the Lord's, and all the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdom of our Christ. Though it tarries now, that vision shall come ; and to Him whose hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear, be the prayer offered till the answer come, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord ; awake, as in the ancient days, and in the days of old."

Caleb the Soldier.

IT is not the quantity, but the temper of the metal, which makes a good sword: nor is it mere bulk, but a large measure of nervous and muscular force, which makes a strong man; and, in accordance with the saying of Napoleon I., that "moral is to physical power as three to one," the wars of all ages have proved that success in battle does not turn so much on the multitude as on the *morale*, on the numbers as on the character, of the troops.

The triumph of the Prussians, for example, in their late brief but bloody contest with Austria, was due less to the superiority of their arms than of their education, intelligence, and religion; under Providence, these, not numbers, or the needle-gun, turned the fortunes of the campaign. To the same, or similar, moral causes Oliver Cromwell owed his remarkable success. Fanatics or not, right or wrong in their religious and political views, his troops were thoughtful men, of strict and even severe manners, within whose camps there was little swearing but much psalm-singing: soldiers who, if they did not, because they could not in conscience, honor the king, feared God. It was from their knees in silent prayer, or from public assemblies held for worship, those men went to

battle, who almost never fought but they conquered, bearing down in the shock of arms the very flower and pride of England's chivalry. By heroic deeds which history records, and John Milton sang, and all denominations of Protestant Christians agree in admiring and approving, the valleys of Piedmont teach the same lesson. Strong were their mountain fastnesses; the dizzy crag they shared with the eagle; the narrow gorge, where, with a roaring torrent on this side, and a dark frowning precipice on that, one brave man, spear in hand, or with boys and women at his back to load the rifles, could hold the pass against a thousand. Yet the salvation of the Waldenses did not lie in "the munition of rocks." To the *morale* which endured three centuries of the cruelest persecution, turned every rock into a monument, faced death on every meadow, and gave to every village its roll of martyrs, was chiefly due the illustrious spectacle of a handful of men defending their faith and country against the arms of Savoy and the persecutions of Rome. It was this which braced them for the struggle, and repeatedly rolled back on the plains of Italy the bleeding fragments of the mighty armies that invaded their mountain homes.

The true defence of a country lies far more in the moral character and spirit of its inhabitants than in ships or arsenals of war; or in the numbers that, soldiers by profession, form its standing army. This was demonstrated by America in its War of Independence, and also by the issue of that gigantic conflict which ended so well in Negro Freedom. Yet, where a country, surrounded with dangerous neighbors, has its shores, its commerce, and also

widely-scattered colonies, to defend, a body of men whose trade is arms, is an institution with which it may not be able to dispense. Such is the situation of our country. Numbering nearly 200,000 men, our standing army forms a very important branch of the public service; and, though a costly, a useful one, so long as, kept at the lowest possible figure, and confined to its own proper duties, it is maintained, not for the purpose of attacking others, but of defending ourselves. No doubt, as in those days when gentlemen wore swords, and were ready to draw them in every petty quarrel and drunken brawl, nations which maintain standing armies are tempted to commit acts of violence. It has been too much their custom to bring ordinary questions to the arbitrament of the sword, and rush without consideration into the unspeakable horrors and cruelties of war. These, however, are not the legitimate uses of such an institution. Circumstances may make it necessary to carry war beyond our shores. We may require to follow the example of Hannibal, who, to draw the enemies of his country from Carthage, invaded Italy, and thundered at the gates of Rome; but the proper motto on the banners of a *standing* as well as of a *volunteer* army is, Defence, and not Offence. In no other way can it receive, I venture to affirm, either the approbation of humanity or the sanctions of religion.

It were a happy thing for us, and the world also, if we could afford to disband our army, and, our situation making it safe to embrace the peace principles of the Society of Friends, might convert every sword into a plowshare, and never more

dig iron from the earth to bury it in a brother's bowels. Men slaughtering each other is a spectacle horrid to contemplate. War, at the best, is a fearful necessity; and there is no doubt that we have rushed into many wars without any just or righteous cause—we have been verily “guilty concerning our brother.” Meanwhile, however, and till the advent of millennial days, the peace principles of that excellent class of citizens, commonly called Quakers, are a dream; and one from which, were we to embrace them, we should be rudely awakened some morning by the roar of cannon on our shores.

So long as we cannot dispense with locks and keys to protect our goods from thieves, nor with police to preserve our persons from assault and our homes from housebreakers, it is vain to hope that we can dispense with the means of protecting our country from those who, though dignified with the names of conquerors, are nothing else than thieves and murderers. Alexander, Cæsar, Napoleon, differed from the felons we send to prison, or consign to a gallows, only in that they plundered, not houses, but kingdoms, and, on bloody battle-fields, strewed with the bodies of mangled thousands, committed not solitary, but wholesale slaughter.

But while we may justify a standing army, I would like to ask what Christian man can justify those arrangements which, in so many respects, convert it into a standing immorality? This is a subject within our sphere, as Christians and patriots, to notice. We have here an enormous evil, which every lover of God, and of the souls

of men, and of his country, should seek to amend. I know few things that call so loudly for reform as the unfavorable circumstances in which we place our soldiers, so far as regards especially their highest, their moral and religious interests. We owe a deep debt of gratitude to our soldiers. They have often defended our shores: nor, like other armies, the tools of ambitious tyrants or usurpers, have they ever turned their swords against the lives or liberties of those whom they were sworn to defend; and therefore their comfort, their material happiness, their moral and religious welfare, should be a grateful country's anxious care. It was eminently so in other days. It appears, for example, from Macaulay's 'History of England,' that the Protector paid the common soldier nearly as much as we now pay our ensigns—double the wages of a day-laborer. His ranks, in consequence, were filled by a much higher and better class than our one shilling a day induces to become soldiers. Recruited with such men, and supplied with devout chaplains and religious ordinances, the army was at that time considered a school of virtue; and Christian parents—as none certainly would do now—sent their sons to its ranks to learn a pure and high morality. And this, to take a merely mercenary view of the matter, paid. They were "well worth the money." Bringing to battle frames unimpaired by vice, and hearts sustained by piety, they formed incomparable soldiers. Their prowess was expressed in the name they won—"Cromwell's Ironsides;" and their high *morale* by the astonishing fact that twenty thousand of them were one day disbanded in the streets of London, thrown on

society, cast all of a sudden out of bread and employment, and yet were guilty of no violence, of no crime, of no breach of the laws. They mingled as quietly with the general community as a drop of water with the wave on whose bosom it falls.

Let us now turn to our army, and look, for instance, at the position of a young recruit. At that time of life when principle is weak and passion strong, he is taken away from under the eye of, I shall say, Christian parents. He has now no godly father or kind mother to please or to grieve by his behavior. He no longer feels, in the respectable character of his family, and the opinion of decent neighbors, incentives to virtue, and a powerful check on vice. Shifted about from place to place, he gains nothing by being a moral, and loses nothing by being a vicious man. He is plied on all hands with temptations to seek relief from the *ennui* of an idle life in the pleasures of licentiousness and debauchery. Thrown in the barrack-room into the company of depraved associates, he finds morality and piety held up to ridicule; nor can he escape, though he would, from hearing and seeing what is calculated to pollute his mind, and blight any lingering regard he may feel for prayer, his Bible, the house of God, the holy Sabbath, and the virtues of his father's home. Is that the care which youth requires, and a Christian country should bestow? But it is from other homes, with exceptions, of course, that our army draws its soldiers. It is where the scum of the city floats, and whisky-shops flank the pavements, that the recruiting-sergeant spreads his net and plies his trade. That, surely, forms no reason, furnishes

no excuse, for the neglect of our soldiers. On the contrary, I have thought, as I saw a batch of ill-fed, ill-clad, dissipated-looking lads, marched off to be examined as recruits, that no class of the community, considering their unhappy antecedents, stood so much in need as they of being shielded from temptation ; and not only guarded from incentives to vice, but surrounded with incentives to virtue. Yet, how miserably is this duty discharged? Prodigal of their blood, but parsimonious of its money, the country does little, compared at least with what it might do, either to preserve or to improve the morals of its soldiers. The consequence is, that these, as is notorious, are too often of the worst description, degrading the men, impairing the efficiency, and adding enormously to the expense of the army. Decency forbids details ; but they may be imagined from the fact that the appearance of our troops has struck others besides our enemies with terror—often filling with anxiety and dread the decent fathers and mothers of the provincial town where they were billeted and happened to sojourn.

This is lamentable : yet the soldiers are less to blame than the Government ; and the Government than a country which sacrifices, as could be proved, to a false economy, the happiness as well as the moral and religious welfare of those it expects to die in its defence. People bewail the immorality of our soldiers. But who is chiefly to blame for that? As if we had never heard the proverb, “Idle dogs worry sheep,” or read the lines,

“And Satan still some mischief finds
For idle hands to do,”

we condemn them to a life of comparative idleness and dull routine ; and, worse still, in the arrangements for our army, run counter to the plainest laws of God. Marriage is discouraged ; not discouraged only, but denied—save in exceptional cases. That divine institution which forms the only true foundation of a holy and happy society, is ignored ; and in its room a system of celibacy is practically enacted, which has in every country, Pagan or Popish, proved destructive of morals—not excepting those of the very ministers of religion. But why should not the soldier, as well as others, receive wages sufficient to maintain a wife and children ? How can this Christian country, with its enormous wealth, justify itself before God or man for arrangements that, I may say, doom its soldiers to a life of vice?—a wrong that appears all the greater when we see how, as in the Madras army, where their families accompany the troops, we grant privileges to the natives of India which we deny to our own countrymen. Cowards, and worshippers of Mammon, we yield to heathenism what we refuse to Christianity. We have no right to maintain an army at the expense of the moral and religious interests of its men : nor can any good reason be given why their pay should not be so augmented, and their movements so limited or arranged, as to allow our soldiers the blessings of domestic life, and a better home than they can ever find amid the discomforts and immoralities of a barrack-room. I have mingled with them ; I have slept in a hut ; I have passed nights in the camp ; I have conversed on these matters with all classes, from the general com-

manding a brigade to the private lost in the rank and file ; and I know not a grander object for a Christian statesman and patriot to take up, than devising a remedy for these wrongs—wrongs of which soldiers do not, because they dare not, complain.

This picture of the morals and condition of our soldiers—for which, I repeat, others are more culpable than they—is quite consistent with the fact that no profession can show finer examples of religion than the army and navy. “All things are yours,” says the apostle, “and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s;” and among these “all things” are to be reckoned the temptations good men have to contend with—the very difficulties they have to encounter in maintaining their religious profession. In this respect none, so much as Christian soldiers, are like gold tried in the fire. The flames that have consumed others seem only to have imparted additional lustre to them ; the efforts they have to make to maintain their position but strengthening their graces, and making them more zealous, bold, and decided than ordinary believers. Just as mountaineers, compared with the inhabitants of the plain, have broader chests, and stronger limbs ; and just as the pines on Norwegian hills, that have to battle with rude tempests and long cold winters, make stouter masts than trees grown in sheltered spots ; and just as the boatmen of isles exposed to northern storms, beaten by Atlantic waves, and swept by surging commingling tides, form braver sailors than those bred on the shores of inland seas, so the remarkable piety of such soldiers as Lieutenant-General

Monro, Colonel Gardiner, Sir Henry Havelock, and Hedley Vicars has been in no small measure due to the very difficulties they had to contend with, the very immoralities they had to witness, and the very battles they had to fight for the faith. Their pre-eminent piety proves, at any rate, what our soldiers might be ; and, drafted abroad as they are to heathen countries, what, were they as pious as they are brave, they might do to recommend the gospel, and carry it to the ends of the earth. They were models of the Christian soldier. Monuments of divine grace, and enduring hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, they were as true to the Cross as to their colors.

Such a model we have in him whose honored name stands at the head of this chapter. Covered with the blood of a hundred battles, crowned with the laurels of a hundred victories, Parliament saw the great captain of our age stand up before the noblest assembly of the world to receive the thanks of his king and country. Caleb received a higher honor. Not Moses, their leader, not the assembled tribes, but God himself applauded his conduct and crowned his brows with the laurels of an immortal renown—and now taking him as our type and model, let us look at two of the many soldierly qualities by which he won the palm.

CALEB'S FIDELITY.

Fidelity is one of the first properties of a soldier ; and it were well that every good cause, and especially that of Christ, could boast of such fidelity as gallant men have often shown in the ranks of war. Mere boys have bravely carried the colors

of their regiment into battle ; and to save them from falling into the hands of the enemy, they have been known, when they themselves fell, to wrap them around their bodies, and die within their encrimsoned folds. An incident more heroic still occurred on one of those fields where Austria lately suffered disastrous defeat. When the bloody fight was over, and the victors were removing the wounded, they came on a young Austrian stretched on the ground, whose life was pouring out in the red streams of a ghastly wound. To their astonishment he declined their kind services. Recommending others to be removed, he implored them, though he might still have been saved, to let him alone. On returning some time afterwards they found him dead—all his battles o'er. But the mystery was explained. They raised the body to give it burial ; and there, below him, lay the colors of his regiment. He had sworn not to part with them ; and though he clung to life, and tenderly thought of a mother and sisters in their distant home, he would not purchase recovery at the price of his oath, and the expense of a soldier's honor—" he was faithful unto death."

There was nothing in Pompeii, that most weird and wonderful of all cities—" city of the dead," as Walter Scott kept repeating to himself when they bore the shattered man through its silent streets—that invested it with a deeper interest to me than the spot where a soldier of old Rome displayed a most heroic fidelity. That fatal day on which Vesuvius, at whose feet the city stood, burst out into an eruption that shook the earth, poured torrents of lava from its riven sides, and discharged,

amid the noise of a hundred thunders, such clouds of ashes as filled the air, produced a darkness deeper than midnight, and struck such terror into all hearts, that men thought not only that the end of the world had come and all must die, but that the gods themselves were expiring,—on that night a sentinel kept watch by the gate which looked to the burning mountain. Amid unimaginable confusion and shrieks of terror mingling with the roar of the volcano, and cries of mothers who had lost their children in the darkness, the inhabitants fled the fatal town, while the falling ashes, loading the darkened air, and penetrating every place, rose in the streets till they covered the house-roofs, nor left a vestige of the city but a vast silent mound, beneath which it lay unknown, dead and buried, for nearly 1700 years. Amid this fearful disorder the sentinel at the gate had been forgotten; and as Rome required her sentinels, happen what might, to hold their posts till relieved by the guard or set at liberty by their officers, he had to choose between death or dishonor. Pattern of fidelity, he stood by his post. Slowly but surely, the ashes rise on his manly form; now they reach his breast; and now covering his lips, they choke his breathing. He also was “faithful unto death.” After seventeen centuries they found his skeleton standing erect in a marble niche, clad in its rusty armor—the helmet on his empty skull, and his bony fingers still closed upon his spear. And next almost to the interest I felt in placing myself on the spot where Paul, true to his colors, when all men deserted him, plead before the Roman tyrant, was the interest I felt in the niche by the

city gate where they found the skeleton of one who, in his fidelity to the cause of Cæsar, sets us an example of faithfulness to the cause of Christ—an example it were for the honor of their Master that all his servants followed.

This property of a good soldier was eminently illustrated by Caleb. One of the twelve heads of the tribes of Israel, whom Moses selected to spy out the promised land, he entered Canaan along with Joshua and the other ten—travelling from its southernmost to its northern border. In this expedition his fidelity and courage do not appear to have been put to the test. Nor is it difficult to explain how this happened, and they were able to execute their commission without being suspected of the character, or suffering the fate of spies—safe from the dangers to which the two men were exposed who, forty years afterwards, were sent into Jericho.

Caleb and his associates entered the land of Canaan little more than twelve months after Israel had left that of Egypt. At this time, no report of what had happened there seemed to have reached the Canaanites. But when the host, after wandering in the wilderness for forty years, returned to the borders of the promised land, they found its inhabitants, as well they might be, all on the alert—the whole country alarmed by reports, which fame would not lessen but rather exaggerate, of how the host that approached their borders had been miraculously sustained in the wilderness, and how, aided by Jehovah, they had trodden in the dust the greatest kings and nations that had attempted to oppose their progress. It

was not till Caleb returned to the camp of Israel that, as I proceed now to show, he met with anything to put his fidelity to the test, and bring it out, an illustrious example to future ages.

The news that the spies are returning flies like wildfire through the tents, and calls for all the people. There they come—browned with the sun and dust of travel. They bring proofs of the fertility of the soil in the fruits which they hold in their hands ; and in that one bunch of grapes, a cluster so weighty, that it requires two men to carry. The camp is full of joy ; and every ear intent as, addressing Moses in the hearing of the people, the spies say—“ We came into the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey ; and this is the fruit of it.” Alas ! their joy is short-lived. How are their hearts struck with dread, and the hopes they have cherished changed into blank despair, as the spies go on to say—“ Nevertheless the people be strong, and the cities are walled, and very great ;” adding, with voices that trembled at the recollection of their gigantic forms, “ and we saw the children of Anak there !” The children of Anak ? At this news the whole congregation grows pale with terror. Fear sits on every face ; and expresses itself in a low murmuring wail that, unless it meets a timely check, will ere long break out into open mutiny. At this crisis Caleb interposes—not to deny the statement of his associates, but to repudiate the cowardly conclusion they suggested, and the people accepted. Faithful to the cause of God, he rushes to the front to deliver himself of words full of faith and courage. They sound like

a battle trumpet. No doubt the Canaanites are strong ; their walls are high ; their ranks led on by giant warriors, the formidable sons of Anak. Nevertheless, as one who knew that He who was with them was greater than all who could be against them, Caleb cries out, "Let us go up at once and possess it ; we are well able to overcome it."

So he spake. But ere Joshua, if we may judge from the narrative, has time to second him, and echo this heroic address, the other spies interpose. Now painting matters darker than at first, they complete the panic, saying, "All the people that we saw in it are men of great stature ; and there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak ; and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in theirs !" At these words, as if a thunderbolt, or shell, had dropt among them, the multitude suddenly disperse. Through the livelong night weeping fills the camp ; nor does joy come in the morning. They have abandoned themselves to despair. Regretting that they had ever left the land of Egypt, they resolve to retrace their steps. They cast blame on God ; and give way to such grief, and rage, and wild, blind fury, that Moses and Aaron are confounded. Knowing neither what to do, nor how to turn the people from their mad purpose, they fall on their faces ; and lie on the ground—as if they said, If you will go back to Egypt, it is over our bodies you shall go ! At this moment, though it was like laying hands on the mane of a raging lion, Caleb, supported by Joshua, once more steps forward ; and regardless of a life the people had armed themselves with stones to

destroy, he reproaches their cowardice, saying, "Rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread to us, their defence is departed from them. The Lord is with us; fear them not!" Another moment, and, his life battered out of him by a shower of stones, Caleb had fallen a sacrifice to his own fidelity, and the people's fury. But suddenly, in the form of some brilliant, dazzling, intolerable light, the well-known symbol of the divine presence, "the glory of the Lord appears in the tabernacle before all the children of Israel." They, not Caleb and Joshua, nor Moses and Aaron, are in peril now. God is ready to destroy them; and they had been swept from the face of the earth but for Moses' earnest and timely intercession. They are doomed for their sin to wander forty years in the wilderness, until the carcasses of all who were over twenty years of age on leaving Egypt have fallen there. God forgives them. Merciful and gracious, He forgets their offence, but not Caleb's fidelity. "Surely," he says, "they shall not see the land, but my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereunto he went; and his seed shall possess it." Even so shall it be with all who, faithful to the sacred interests of their Heavenly Master, prove themselves good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Remembering their fidelity in the hour of trial, how they stood by His cause, resisted temptations, by faith crucified the flesh, by the blood of the covenant overcame the world, how they denied themselves but not Him, how they were of "another spirit"

from the mass of mere professors, and how in purpose, if not always in practice, they "followed the Lord fully," them also will He bring into the land whither they go—the ransomed of the Lord, a sacramental host, pilgrims to the Heavenly Canaan.

CALEB'S COURAGE.

Courage, which has in all ages won the praise of poets and admiration of mankind, is a property for which our seamen and soldiers have been long and eminently distinguished. Descended from ancestors who met the Romans on the sea-beach, and those brave Norsemen who ploughed the stormiest oceans with their warlike prows, our countrymen have proved themselves worthy of their sires; and the repute of a courage which has been tested in many a hard-fought field, has proved, under God, the strongest bulwark of our island-home. It is remarkable, and highly creditable to the resolution and bravery of our soldiers, that, notwithstanding all the wars in which they have engaged, no foreign nation flaunts a flag of ours as the trophy of its victory, and of our defeat. No British banner, so far as I know, hangs drooping in dusty folds from the walls of foreign castle or cathedral to make us blush; nor in that proud pillar the great Napoleon raised, whose bronze, formed of the cannon taken by him in battle, commemorates his victories, is there an ounce of metal that belonged to a British gun. I have heard indeed how cowards, probably drawn from the scum of the people, hung back when the bugler in the trenches sounded a new assault; and refused to cross ground so strewn with their fallen

comrades as to resemble a field carpeted with scarlet cloth. Yet, whatever may be their defects, our soldiers have been commonly as much distinguished for their courage when the battle raged, as for their clemency when the victory was won.

For that courage, true, calm courage, which does not lie in insensibility to danger, nor in the violent animal passion which may bear a coward forward as a whirlwind does the dust, or a wave the seaweed on its foaming crest, Caleb presents the very model of a soldier. How bravely he bears himself when the other spies prove traitors! With fire in his eye and resolution seated on his brow, he steps forth to cry, "Let us go up at once and possess the land!—Away with these coward fears!" The speech this, be it observed, not of one who was to guard the camp or bring up the rear. Judah's place is in the front of battle. The bloody wave breaks first on that gallant tribe; and of all its warriors, first on Caleb—its prince and head. Nor was this bold proposal to face and fight the sons of Anak, an empty boast, a mere bravado. Forty years thereafter his courage was put to that test—the portion of the land assigned him, at his own request, being held by the giant race whose descendant, Goliath of Gath, struck terror into the boldest hearts in Israel, as he went forth vamping before their host—till he fell to the shepherd's sling, defying the armies of the living God. It was from the hands of giants Caleb wrung his inheritance. Undaunted by their towering stature, he met them, sword to sword, foot to foot, in the bloody field; the God in whom he trusted inspiring his heart with such courage

and endowing his arm with such strength, that they succumbed before his blows—their armor loudly clashing, and the very earth shaking in their fall.

The source of Caleb's courage, of a bravery so admirable and dauntless, is not far to seek. In him, as in those noble Christian soldiers whom I have mentioned, and in others also who have maintained their religion in the camp, courage, if it did not spring from, was sustained by piety. He had faith in God. Therefore he did not fear the face of man, though that man were a giant; nor of death itself. From the same lofty source, and none other, the soldier of the cross, he who fights with foes more formidable than giants—the devil, the world, and the flesh, that trinity of evil—is to draw his courage. No grace more necessary than that in one who would do his duty to Jesus, and to His cause. Courage to speak for Christ everywhere, and act for Christ always, is a grace of the highest value—yet one in which, alas! many a good man, to the dishonor of his Master, and the loss of others, has been sadly wanting. The Apostle Paul possessed it: and what he himself possessed in a degree so eminent, he enforced on his converts, saying, "Add to your faith virtue," or, as it were better translated, "courage." No greater bravery, indeed, in battlefields than what the Christian may require! More of it may be needed to face the jeers of an ungodly world than a blazing battery of cannon.

In illustration of this, hear what a nobleman of ancient family, and high rank, and still higher piety, has written in a very precious record which was lately given to the public:—"I felt," he

says, "that salvation must be sought and attained, though the path to it lay through fire and water, and that no hardships were worth a moment's consideration in comparison of so great a prize. In the same manner the pursuits of my life hitherto appeared utterly frivolous. They could not advance me one step on the road to heaven. I resolved to make an entire change in my life, to spend the whole day in the service of God, and devote myself entirely to the promotion of His glory. Yet how to begin, I knew not. I felt I ought earnestly to address every one I met, beginning with my own servants; that I ought to speak out, and not sneak into heaven by the back door. For several days, however, I did nothing. I shrunk from the idea of declaring myself, and dreaded the remarks of relatives, acquaintances, and servants. I seriously debated with myself, since society presented such great difficulties in our way, whether we should not leave all, and fly with our children to a distant land: where, living quite unknown, we might commence our new life with fewer outward impediments, and spend our days in prayer, praise, and preaching to others Christ's gospel of salvation. It was in my mind to give up our inheritance, reserving only enough for our bare support, and, taking leave of all our connections, to burn, as it were, our ships behind us, and, dying to this world, to live entirely for the next. To the objection that we should be deserting the station in which God had placed us, I urged that our first duty is the care of our own souls. I compared it to Lot flying out of Sodom. In giving up my hereditary rank and riches, I con-

sidered that I should injure no one. My children being brought up in total ignorance of their origin, would have no cause for regret, and, if religion be true, they would be incalculable gainers, since riches (if Christ be an authority) are a great hindrance in the way to heaven. For several days I debated this question with myself, and one consideration alone determined my conclusion on it in the negative. I could not reconcile it with my duty to leave my aged father."

These are the touching words of one who lived to openly avow his change, and confess Christ before the world. He added to his faith courage. His circumstances needed it, and so—though perhaps to a less degree—do those of the humblest Christians. Nor shall we go without it, if we seek God's help, the aids of His Holy Spirit. He that gave Nicodemus, who once came stealing to Jesus under the cloud of night, courage to perform the last kind offices to the dead, and boldly attend the funeral; He who gave the disciple, that denied his Master before a woman, courage to confess him before all the Jews, and charge home on them the guilt of his innocent blood; He will make his feeblest followers "valiant for the truth"—bold to avow themselves the followers of Jesus, and say—

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause,
Maintain the glory of His cross,
And honor all his laws.

"Jesus, my Lord, I know His name,
His name is all my boast;
Nor will He leave my soul to shame,
Nor let my hope be lost."

Boaz the Farmer.

FARMING, rather than gardening in the ordinary sense of the word, is man's oldest occupation: in point of time, at least, claiming priority of all others. It may not be esteemed the most dignified one, nor may those engaged in it be generally found either the most enlightened or refined of men; still, instituted by Divine authority, and pursued by man in his primeval innocence, with the ordinances of marriage and the Sabbath-day, it is a vestige of Eden. Thus, though *rustic* and *boorish*, terms of reproach, be borrowed from country life, and the author of Ecclesiasticus held those engaged in its pursuits so cheap as to say, "Seek not counsel of him whose talk is of bullocks," the business of a farmer, as regards both its age and origin, is invested with a dignity that belongs to no other profession.

" The sacred plow
Employed the kings and fathers of mankind
In ancient times."

Besides, it is probable, if not certain, that it is the one employment in which man had God for his teacher. The heathens themselves represent the gods as having taught him how to cultivate corn; and in this, as in many of their other

legends, they have preserved a valuable fragment of ancient truth. While some trades are of very recent origin, photography, for example, and while many have advanced to their present stage of perfection by slow steps, as spinning, from the simple distaff, still generally used in Brittany and occasionally in our remotest Highlands, to the complicated machines that whirl amid the dust and din of crowded factories, it is a remarkable fact that the cereal grasses, wheat, barley, and other grains which the farmer now cultivates, were cultivated four thousand years ago. Forming new fabrics; discovering new metals; learning how, as in ships, to make iron swim—the sun, as in photographs, to paint portraits—the lightning, as in telegraphs, to carry messages—and fire and water, as in locomotives, to whirl us along the ground with the speed of an eagle's wing—man has, to use the words of Scripture, even in our own time, "found out many inventions." Yet he has not added one to the number of our cereals during the last four thousand years. He appears in fact to have started on his career with a knowledge of these; a knowledge he could have obtained from none but God. He it was who taught him the arts of agriculture—what plants to cultivate, and how to cultivate them. There is that indeed in the nature of wheat, barley, and the other cereals, which goes almost to demonstrate that God specially created them for man's use, and originally committed them to his care. These plants are unique in two respects—first, unlike others, the fruits or roots of which we use for food, they are found wild nowhere on the face of the whole earth; and secondly,

unlike others also, they cannot prolong their existence independent of man, without his care and culture.

For example, let a field which has been sown with wheat, barley, or oats, be abandoned to the course of nature—and what happens? The following year a scanty crop, springing from the grain it shed, may rise in thin stalks on the uncultivated soil: but in a few summers more, every vestige of it has vanished, “nor left a wrack behind.”

A more than curious, this is an important fact. It proves that those grains which form his main subsistence cannot maintain themselves without the hand and help of man; and proving that, it proves this also, that man started on his career a tiller of the ground—no such being as infidels in their hatred of the Bible represent him to have been—a naked savage, ignorant alike of arts and letters, little raised in intelligence above the wild animals in whose dens he sought a home, and of whose prey he sought a share. This fact in Natural History corroborates the testimony of Scripture; and shows us, in fields where every stalk stands up a living witness for the truth of the Bible, the revelations of God's Word visibly written on the face of Nature. Waving with golden corn, and sounding with the songs of reapers, these fields carry the thoughtful mind back to the days when God first set man to till the ground; and, suggestive of Eden, they prompt the wish that with its primeval employments more of its primeval innocence were found among our rural population.

The scene before me, as I write these words, suggests another view of the occupation in which

Boaz spent his days. Beyond the estuary of the Dee, over whose broad sands, celebrated in tragic song, the tide, flecked with the sails of shipping craft and fishing-boats, has rolled, lies, a few miles off, the winding shore of Wales—the land rising gently from the beach in corn and pasture fields to heights over which a picturesque range of mountains heaves itself up against the evening sky. Along that low shore lie scattered towns and villages, whose tall chimneys, dwarfing tower and steeple, pour out their smoke to pollute the air, and cast a murky veil on the smiling face of nature. These bespeak the trades they pursue who, leaving the husbandman to his cheerful labors on the green surface of the earth, penetrate its bowels to rob them of their hidden treasures—the mine of its coals, and the mountains of their metals. But these—valuable as they are, many hands as they employ, and much as they contribute to the influence and wealth of our country—are undergoing a process of exhaustion. Some think we shall soon reach their limit; and are already bewailing the prospect when, with fires quenched in ruined furnaces, and spindles rusting in silent mills, and ships rotting in unfrequented harbors, Britain shall bid a long farewell to all her greatness. But when mines are empty, and furnaces stand quenched and cold, and deep silence reigns in the caverns where the axe of the pitman sounded, the husbandman shall still plow the soil. His, the first man's, shall probably be the last man's employment. Continued throughout those millennial years when with swords turned into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, "the whole earth

is at rest, and is quiet," the archangel's trumpet shall scare the peasant at the plow, or summon him from the harvest-field. Fit emblem of the blessings of saving grace, the bounties of the soil are exhaustless. Husbandry will thus prove, as it is the oldest, the most permanent of all employments; and, since it produces the nation's food, and is according to many the true source of its wealth, there is none with which the public welfare is so extensively and intimately bound up.

The occupation which Boaz followed rises still higher in importance when we look at the multitudes it employs. Great as we are in commerce and manufactures—clothing nations with our fabrics, covering every sea with ships, and carrying the produce of our arts to every shore—the cultivation of the soil employs a larger number of hands than any other trade. And thus if "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" be a sound and noble adage, the temporal, moral, and spiritual interests of our agricultural population should bulk very large in the eyes of Christian patriots. Now these interests turn to a great extent on the manner in which those who follow Boaz's occupation discharge their duties: and it is therefore a matter of thankfulness that in him the Book which instructs both kings and beggars, peers and peasants, how to live, sets before us a model farmer. Happy our country were all its farmers like him, and all their servants like his!—making rural innocence a reality; not merely a poet's dream, or the graceful ornament of a speech. Let us study this pattern.

HIS DILIGENCE IN BUSINESS.

Boaz was not one whom necessity compelled to labor. He was rich; and is indeed called "a mighty man of wealth." Yet he made that no reason for wasting his life in ease and idleness. Nor though, as appears from the Scripture narrative, he employed overseers—men no doubt of character and integrity—did he consider it right to commit his business entirely into their hands. Here is a lesson for us.

In the first place, such irresponsibility is not good for servants. It places them in circumstances of temptation to act dishonestly; and yielding to temptations to which no man is justified in unnecessarily exposing others, many a good servant has had his ruin to lay at the door of a too easy and confiding master. Neither is it, in the second place, for the master's interests. *The eye of the master maketh a fat horse*, says an English Proverb. *The farmer ploughs best with his feet*, says a Scotch one—his success turning on the attention he personally gives to the superintendence of his servants and the different interests of his farm. Boaz in the field among his reapers, or at the winnowing season foregoing the luxury of a bed to sleep at the back of a heap of corn, that, losing no time in travelling between his house and the distant threshing-floor, he might resume his work by the break of day, is an example of these old, wise adages; and how, pattern to others as well as farmers, a Christian should be—as the Apostle says, and Jesus was—"not slothful in business," while "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Religion, sanctifying the secu-

larities of life, does not teach us to neglect our business ; but, on the contrary, to attend to it—making it as much our duty to repair to our farm, or shop, or counting-house, during the week, as, turning our back on them and dismissing their cares from our minds, to repair to church on the Lord's Day.

The hand of the diligent, says the wise man, maketh rich. It does more : Boaz's industry probably contributed as much to his moral safety as to his material wealth. Neither in the inspired Bible, nor elsewhere, is there a more important practical truth than that expressed by the epigrammatic saying, *The devil tempts every man, but an idle man tempts the devil* : and thus it is best for men themselves—and for others also—when their circumstances impose on them a life of constant industry. Those engaged in Boaz's pursuits form no exception to that adage ; as was remarkably illustrated by the state of a country parish with which I was once acquainted. Many of its farms were held on life-leases, and at very low rents ; but the rest were let at prices which required their tenants to be industrious and economical. And so inferior in point of culture was the first class to the second, that a stranger could have told which was which. Nor were the advantages of a condition which neither permits nor fosters idleness less visible in the character of the farmers, than in the condition of the farms. With exceptions of course on both sides, those who could not meet term-day without being diligent in business, were respectable in character, men of sober habits, wealthy and well to do ; while not a few of the others became bank-

rupts—some living as much bankrupt in character, as they died insolvent in circumstances. The bird that ceases to use its wings does not hang in mid-air, but drops like a stone to the ground ; and by a law almost as certain, he sinks into evil habits whose time and faculties are not engaged in innocent and good employments. So much is this the case, that though periods of relaxation are desirable, there is danger in unduly prolonging them. “There are few indeed,” says Addison in the *Spectator*, “who know how to be idle and innocent : every diversion they take is at the expense of some one virtue or another, and their very first step out of business is into vice or folly.” The purest water left to stagnate grows putrid ; and the finest soil thrown into fallow soon throws up a crop of weeds. Had David, as in other days, followed his army to the battle-field, he had perilled his life, but saved his character ; escaping a temptation that owed perhaps more than half its power to the luxurious ease and idleness of a palace. Idleness is the mother of mischief : and who would keep their hands from doing wrong must employ them in doing good.

But this can only be done to the advantage of others, as well as of ourselves, by imitating the diligence of Boaz. “Slothful in business,” he had not been in circumstances to be generous as well as just. I have had much to do with begging of a kind ; and have often observed that those were most distinguished for their munificence in charities who were most distinguished for their diligence in business. It gives the ability to bless others ; and in that a good man will find ample reasons for

managing his affairs with diligence and discretion—making it a matter, not of choice, but of conscience. If we do not need money, others do. Many good and noble causes, like Ruth, require assistance; nor can any but those who are careful of their affairs afford to deal with them as Boaz with the widow, whom he generously invited to the bounties of his table—besides, with such a delicate regard to her feelings as reflected the highest credit on his own, whispering to his servants, “Let her glean among the sheaves, and let fall some handfuls on purpose for her.”

Here is a pattern to copy; and a noble incentive to diligence in business—one which, though we take a long step from the case of this honorable man to that of a thief, Paul employed, saying, “Let him who stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.” For this end, men who could afford to retire from business have continued in it. Instead of seeking rest in the evening of life, they have labored on to its close; they have denied themselves for Him who denied himself for them; and that they might have to give to such as lacked, toiled on till the oar dropped from their weary hands. Far more than the life of the hermit who retires to cloister or mossy cell, that he may pass the long day in solitude and alone with God, or that of one who occupies his whole time with religious speculations, or the ordinary duties of devotion, is his a religious life who for such an object holds his post to the last; continuing diligent in business, that he may have wherewithal to

glorify God, assist the cause of the Redeemer, and bless humanity—that he may be a husband of the widow, and a father of the fatherless ; that he may reclaim the lapsed, and raise the fallen, and whether they be the godless at home or the heathen abroad, save such as are ready to perish.

HIS COURTEOUSNESS.

“Be ye courteous” is a duty which Paul—himself a fine example of it—enjoins on Christians. He who began his defence before Agrippa in this graceful fashion—“I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews ; especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews : wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently”—was no rude, coarse, vulgar man. His was courtesy to a superior ; but a still finer ornament of manners, and of religion also, is a courtesy to inferiors. And what a fine example of that is Boaz ! It is with no cold looks, nor distant air, nor rough speech, nor haughty bearing, making his reapers painfully sensible of their inferiority—that they are servants and he their master—Boaz enters the harvest field. “The master !” spoken by one who has espied him approaching—words that strike with dread the noisy urchins of a school—neither turns their mirth into silence, nor makes them start to reluctant labors. Benevolence beams forth in his looks ; and as the children who have attended their mothers to the field, won of old by his gifts and ready smile, run

to meet him, he approaches with kindness on his lips. These are not sealed in cold silence, or opened but to find fault with his servants, and address them roughly. "The Lord be with you," is his salutation. They, dropping work, face round, sickles in hand, health in their ruddy cheeks, and the sweat of honest labor on their brows, to welcome their master, and, his inferiors in rank, but his equals in pious courtesy, to reply, "The Lord bless thee!" More beautiful than the morning, with its dews sparkling like diamonds on the grass, and its golden beams tipping the surrounding hills of Bethlehem, these morning salutations between master and servants! Loving him, they esteemed his interests their own.

These beautiful expressions, as might be inferred from the words of the 129th Psalm: "Let them be as the grass upon the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up; wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom; neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you: we bless you in the name of the Lord," may possibly have grown into a custom. Be it so. It was a very good custom. It had its root in the kindly relations that subsisted in these happy days between masters and servants; and the lack of which in ours breeds the jealousies that ever and anon break out in the unhappy strikes that entail such pecuniary losses on the employers, and such bitter sufferings on the families of the employed. Whatever may have been the case with others, Boaz's courtesy was more than a form of speech—that French politeness, so often like the *French polish* which imparts

to mean timber the lustre of fine-grained woods. His conduct corresponded with his speech. Observe the eye of compassion he cast on Ruth ; his kindness to the lonely stranger ; the delicacy with which he sought to save her feelings while he relieved her poverty ; the respect he showed to her misfortunes and her generous attachment to Naomi. He paid as much honor to the virtues and feelings of this poor gleaner as if she had been the finest lady in the land. Behold true courteousness !

This grace is a great set-off to piety. As such it should be assiduously cultivated by all who desire to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour" —religion associated with a kind and courteous manner, being, to use Solomon's figure, like "apples of gold in pictures of silver."

Nor is there any reason, as the case of Boaz proves, why courteousness should be foreign to a country life ; or rural scenes should breed rude manners. No doubt those who reside in towns, being brought in frequent contact with others, acquire a polish more readily than country people—even as the stones on the sea-beach become rounded and smooth by the tides that roll them against each other. Allowance is to be made for this, and other disadvantages which belong to country life. For candor requires us, in judging others, to take into account the drawbacks of their position ; that every profession has its own peculiar temptations ; and that censorious people will find it easier to condemn the faults of others, than they would, were they in their circumstances, to avoid them. The cultivator, like the lord of the soil,

seldom meets his superiors ; and even his equals much less frequently than the citizen, who, on crowded 'change and busy streets, comes in daily contact with many, of talents, acquirements, and position as good as his own. Walking his farm as a little kingdom—as the captain of a man-of-war his quarter-deck—and surrounded only by servants and inferiors, the circumstances of a farmer are not the most conducive to the acquisition of very courteous manners. Yet what he, as well as all other masters, may and should be is seen in Boaz. A farmer, he was in the old, true sense of the word every inch a *gentleman* ; pious, yet of polished manners ; wealthy, yet gracious to the poor, and esteeming virtue above rank or riches ; with dependents, yet treating the humblest of them with respectful courtesy ; one in whom were beautifully blended the politeness of a court and the simple virtues of a country life.

A good practical lesson may be learned from the way in which this man bore himself toward his inferiors. It is by no means uncommon to hear servants, our peasantry, and the common people blamed for their rude and vulgar manners. But they who censure what I do not altogether deny, far less commend, would do well to remember that there were more servants courteous as those of Boaz, were there more masters like him. Why are the lower classes not respectful to the superior ? May it not be, and is it not true to a large extent, that the latter are not respectful to them ? *Like begets like*, they say ; and of that, so far as courteousness is concerned, France, and other countries of the Continent, furnish remarkable illustrations.

One of their pleasant features is the respectful manner which the upper classes show to the humbler, with which a master addresses his own servant. The result is that the lower catch the manners of the upper classes, and are not rude, because they are not rudely treated. Men are like mirrors; they reflect the features of those that look at them.

We, Britons, plume ourselves on our superiority to our neighbors in morals and religion. But why should not religion, in begetting kind and courteous manners, do as much, and more for us than nature or fashion does for them? What rude and unmannerly language have I heard addressed to servants! How little do many scruple to wound the feelings of their inferiors!—a vulgar and cowardly, as well as an unchristian thing. They cannot return the blow; and it is like striking a man when he is down. Courteousness lies in a due regard to the feelings of others, and is a Christian duty. Paul enforced it by his precepts, and illustrated it by his example. The whole tone and tenor of the Bible teaches us to be gentle; to be courteous as well as kind; to esteem men of low degree; to be kindly affectioned one toward another; and so to bear ourselves to our inferiors as to make them forget, rather than remember, their inferiority. The followers of Jesus are to be humble, not haughty—“clothed with humility,” says the Apostle: a robe, next to the righteousness which, covering all our sins, was woven on Calvary and dyed white in the blood of Christ, the fairest man can wear.

HIS PIETY.

“The Lord be with you”—his address to the reapers on entering the harvest-field—has the ring of sterling metal. What a contrast Boaz offers to farmers we have known, by whose lips God's name was frequently profaned, but never honored—their servants, like their dogs and horses, being often cursed, but never once blessed! And in accordance with the apothegm, *Like master like man*, what shocking oaths have we heard, volleying as it were out of the mouth of hell, from the lips of coarse, animal, sensual farm-servants!

Boaz almost never opens his mouth but pearls drop out. His speech breathes forth pious utterances. All his conversation is seasoned with grace; and, though the result of a divine change of heart, how natural his religion seems!—not like a gala-dress assumed for the occasion—not like gum-flowers worn for ornament, but such as spring living from the sward—not like an artificial perfume that imparts a passing odor to a thing that is dead, but the odors exhaled by roses or lilies bathed in the dews of heaven. One who could say, “I have set the Lord always before me.” God is in all the good man's thoughts; and His noly name as often in his mouth to be honored, as it is in others to be profaned. Though it may have been a common custom to bless the harvest and its reapers, he did it from his heart; nor were they words of course, or custom, he spoke when bending on Ruth an eye of mingled pity and admiration, he said, “It hath fully been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law

since the death of thine husband : and how thou hast left thy father, and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord remember thy work ; and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust."

Nor was it only in the language of piety that his piety expressed itself. It did not evaporate in words. We have heard him speak, see how he acts ! One night sleeping by a heap of corn, alone as he supposed, he wakes to find a woman lying at his feet. It is Ruth. Instructed by Naomi, she takes this strange Jewish fashion—of which, as of herself, in a future chapter, we shall have more to say—to seek her rights, and commit her fortunes into his hands. There is not in all history a passage more honorable to true religion than the story of that midnight meeting. Silver seven times purified never shone brighter, as it flowed from the glowing furnace, than Boaz's high principles then and there—not purer or brighter the stars that looked down on the scene of such a trial, and such a triumph. The house of God, the holy table where, by the symbols of Christ's bloody death, saints have held high intercourse with heaven, never begot purer thoughts than this threshing-floor that night. A noble contrast to such as, disgracing their profession, have received women beneath their roof to undermine their virtue and work their ruin, Boaz, in his fear of God and sacred regard to a poor gleaner's good name, is a pattern to all men. Ruling his own spirit, he stands there "better than he that taketh

a city." He is enrolled among the progenitors of the Messiah ; nor, take him for all in all, was there one in the list of whom Christ had less cause to be ashamed ; more worthy to be the ancestor of an incarnate God, of Him who was "holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners."

HIS CARE FOR THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INTERESTS OF HIS SERVANTS.

Boaz in his own life set them an example of piety which could hardly fail to produce a favorable impression on their minds. Some are content to get work out of their servants ; they take no interest in their souls—no more than if, like the cattle they tend, they had no souls at all. Unlike these, Boaz spoke to his servants as a God-fearing man. One who felt himself responsible to God and to their parents also, he charged himself with the care of their morals. This appears in the warnings and kind instructions he gave both to them and to Ruth. So soon as he found her in his fields she became the object not of his compassion only, but of his pious regards ; and though but a poor gleaner, nor servant of his at all, he took as much pains to protect her from contamination, or insult, as if she had been his own daughter.

People speak of Model Farms. In the best sense of the expression his was one ; and farmers will find in his care for the virtuous and religious interests of his servants a most excellent pattern to copy. There is great need they should. Many are more careful about their cattle and crops than

of their children and servants—of the hours they keep; of the manner in which they spend their Sabbaths; of their associates; of the dangers to which the nature of their work exposes them; and above all of their being often left, and sometimes, I may say, forced, to seek company and courtship under the cloud of night. It were as reasonable to look for grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, as for a pious and moral population in some parts of the country.

Look for example at that gang system of young men and women working together in the fields without any proper guardianship, which, prevailing everywhere to some extent, has assumed in England such proportions of iniquity, cruelty, and evil, as to call—and not too soon—for the exposures of the press, and the interference of Parliament.

“The system of organized labor, known by the name of ‘Agricultural Gangs,’ exists,” say the Commissioners, “in Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Nottinghamshire; and, in a few instances, in the counties of Northampton, Bedford, and Rutland. They consist of the gang-master and a number of women and young persons of both sexes from six to eighteen years of age. The numbers in each gang are from ten to forty. The whole number of boys and girls employed in the public gangs amounts to about 7,000, and in the private to as many as 20,000.”

These gangs are engaged in out-door work; and hell and heaven hardly offer a stronger contrast than the fields where Boaz went with pious salutations, and those where these unhappy creatures are brutally treated, and initiated in very childhood into the practice of the grossest vices. For the cruelty of the system, let us hear a mother, Mrs.

Adams, the wife of a laborer in Huntingdonshire. She says :

“In June, 1862, my daughters, Harriet and Sarah, aged respectively eleven and thirteen years, were engaged to work on Mr. Worman’s land at Stilton. When they got there he took them to near Peterborough : there they worked for six weeks, going and returning each day. The distance each way is eight miles, so that they had to walk sixteen miles each day on all the six working days of the week, besides working in the field from eight o’clock to five or half-past in the afternoon. They used to start from home at five in the morning, and seldom got back before nine. They had to find all their own meals, as well as their own tools (such as hoes). They (the girls) were good for nothing at the end of the six weeks. The ganger persuaded me to send my little girl Susan, who was then six years of age. She walked all the way (eight miles) to Peterborough to her work, and worked from eight o’clock to half-past five and received fourpence. She was that tired that her sisters had to carry her the best part of the way home—eight miles, and she was ill from it for three weeks, and never went again.”

For its immoral results, amply testified to by others, take the evidence of Dr. Morris, of Spalding, as read by the Earl of Shaftesbury in the House of Lords :

“I have been in practice in the town of Spalding for twenty-five years, and during the greater portion of this time I have been medical officer to the Spalding Union Infirmary. I am convinced that the gang system is the cause of much immorality. The evil in the system is the mixture of the sexes in the case of boys and girls of twelve to seventeen years of age under no proper control. The gangers, as you know, take the work of the farmers. Their custom is to pay their children once a week at some beer-house, and it is no uncommon thing for their children to be kept waiting at the place till eleven or twelve o’clock at night. At the infirmary many girls of fourteen years of age, and even girls of thirteen, up to seventeen years of age, have been brought in pregnant to be confined there. The girls have acknowledged that their ruin has taken place in this gang work. The offence is committed in going or returning from their work. Girls and boys of this age go five, six or even seven miles to work, walking in droves along the roads

and by-laws. I have myself witnessed gross indecencies between boys and girls of fourteen to sixteen years of age. I once saw a young girl insulted by some five or six boys on the road-side. Other older persons were about twenty or thirty yards off, but they took no notice. The girl was calling out, which caused me to stop. I have also seen boys bathing in the brooks, and girls between thirteen and nineteen looking on from the bank."

We used to speak of slave-grown cotton being wet with the tears, and dyed with the blood of injured humanity; but it is at a price as high it seems that some of England's counties grow their corn!

Happily such wrongs and immoralities are not general, far less universal. Yet it must be confessed that there is a lamentable amount of immorality among the population of most, if not all, of our country districts. Take this illustration from a Report on the state of Religion and Morals by a committee of the Free Church of Scotland:

"As much of the district we visited was agricultural, our attention was specially directed to the moral and spiritual condition of the agricultural class. We found, that over all the country, a large number of boys and girls, from nine to fifteen or sixteen years of age, were engaged for about eight months of the year in herding cattle. Being the children of poor parents, they were but half-educated when they entered on this work. They were employed in it both Sabbath-day and week-day, and seldom had an opportunity of attending the house of God or the Sabbath-school. Except in the few cases where the master was a religious man, or some member of the family took an interest in the spiritual well-being of dependents, their spiritual good was entirely neglected. As a class, they seemed never to have been much thought of. As it is from them, as they grow up, the farm-servant class, male and female, is taken, may we not discover in this sad treatment of our herd boys and girls, one of the chief causes of that thoughtlessness, indifference, and immorality, which to so great an extent distinguish our agricultural population? We found many admirable specimens of God-fearing men and women among them. These, however, are the exceptions. One of the most difficult

positions at present for the maintenance of a consistent and faithful adherence to Christ is, we believe, that of a farm-servant. As a class they are truthful and sober. It is only at feeing markets, which are the curse of a place, they think that they are at liberty to get drunk, without much guilt attaching to them. There is much profanity, however, among them; and we were grieved to hear that the sin of swearing was becoming very common among the young in some parts we visited, arising, as some thought, from the sojourn of gangs of navvies there, when the railways of the north were being made. In many of the districts, particularly within the bounds of the Presbyteries of Elgin and Strathbogie, the farm servants in large numbers absent themselves from the house of God. They look on that day as their own, and consider that no master or mistress has a right even to ask them how they spend it. It is employed as a day of visiting and feasting in each other's bothies. In many cases, it is true, they are never asked to join in worship with the family they serve, even if a family altar is kept up in the house; and in those instances in which they are invited, a number of them refuse to attend.

“The great sin of this class is illegitimacy. It is most prevalent in Banffshire and some sections of Morayshire. No country district which your deputies visited is, however, exempt from it. It is one of those questions which the Church is urgently called to consider as she has never yet done, and the more so, as it is found that it is a sin which has a tendency to perpetuate itself, for it is no uncommon thing to find generations of illegimitates. When we come to examine into the social causes of it, much perplexity overhangs the subject. We find it as prevalent in the districts of small farms as of large. We find it to be no less so where there are no bothies, but where the farmer is assisted in farm-work by his own sons and daughters, as where there are bothies.

“Some of the causes to which its prevalence is attributed we found to be—

“(1.) Constant changes of place, for which such facilities are afforded by feeing markets: and thus the evil habits of one district are introduced into others. The length of service seldom exceeds six months.

“(2.) The religious neglect of this class generally by their masters.

“(3.) The fearfully low tone of feeling prevalent on the subject.”

What can be worse than the conversation often

held in barns and fields where there is none to restrain its polluted flow? and do not the reports of the Registrars under the head of illegitimate births, while unveiling but a portion of the immorality, disclose enough to make our land ashamed of its vices, and our churches of their apathy? Not that these reports afford a fair criterion by which to determine the comparative morality of town and country. Reading them, we might suppose that virtue, unlike those plants that decay on being removed from the pure air of the country, thrives best in a smoky atmosphere; and had fled from hill and dale, rural scenes and peasant cottages, to reside in towns. This were a great mistake. Such tables illustrate the paradox that facts are sometimes more deceptive even than figures. There may be the greatest immorality under certain forms, where it presents the least appearance. Much of the vice of cities finds no place in the reports of Registrars; but, so far as these are concerned, flows like the foul sewers that lie below the streets, concealed from public view.

With the view of applying a cure, a more important matter than the relative merits, or demerits, of town and country is, to discover the causes—always allowing for the depravity of our nature—to which the immoralities of our rural districts may be ascribed. In the first place, these may lie to no small extent in the laxity of the churches. The discipline which our Lord and his apostles committed to their successors has no existence in many places, and is in others but a name and mockery. The holy Sacrament of the Supper, with the ordinance of Baptism, is ad-

ministered to all and sundry, without any respect to qualifications or character. It is proper to acknowledge this—Let “judgment begin at the house of God.” And when He, as of old, may say, “Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things ; they have put no difference between the holy and the profane, neither have they showed difference between the clean and unclean,” no wonder that the standard of morality is low. We cannot expect it to be raised till the churches resume the use of the keys, and their ministers, breaking free from the trammels of a spurious delicacy, openly denounce the vices that are eating like a cancer into the bosom of society. Were this done with something of the love of John the Apostle, and the fire of John the Baptist, hearers would cease to complain of sermons being “flat and unprofitable,” and preachers of being surrounded by drowsy congregations.

But, in the second place, much of the abounding immorality is due to the negligence of parents, of the master and mistress of the household or farm, of those who can take a close and daily care of the morals of such as they have in charge. Let every man that has a farm, every man indeed that is a master, take Boaz for his model ! It is not enough that they do not corrupt their servants, and may hold in deserved abhorrence the villain who receives some poor girl into his house to work her ruin and to blast her character. How many do not take sufficient care to prevent those whom they would not corrupt from being corrupted ! Their moral and spiritual interests are sacrificed to indifference, to economy, to convenience—ser-

vants being exposed in the house and field to the "evil communications which corrupt good manners," to temptations to which no man with a proper regard to her virtue would expose his own daughter. This is wrong. It wrongs servants, who have a strong claim on our kind and Christian interest—it wrongs the parents, who, perhaps with trembling hearts and many prayers, have committed them to our charge—it wrongs the country, whose morals and happiness should be our care—it wrongs God, who is no respecter of persons, and cares as much for a humble servant as for a lordly master—it wrongs the Saviour, who died for them, and having taken their form, has a peculiar sympathy with servants: and last of all, it wrongs ourselves, as many shall find on meeting Him who reckoned with Cain for his brother, saying, "Where is thy brother Abel?"

Let it not be supposed from these remarks that I do not love the people as well as the scenes of the country; or am ignorant of how much that is lovely and excellent, fair and honest, good and pious, dwells in farm homestead and lowly cottage.

"Sure peace is his : a solid life, estranged
 To disappointment, and fallacious hope ;
 Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
 In herbs and fruits : whatever greens the Spring,
 When heaven descends in showers ; or bends the bough,
 When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams ;
 Or in the Wintry glebe whatever lies
 Concealed, and fattens with the richest sap :
 These are not wanting ; nor the milky drove,
 Luxuriant, spread o'er all the lowing vale ;
 Nor bleating mountains ; nor the hide of streams
 And hum of bees, inviting sleep sincere

Into the guileless breast, beneath the shade,
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay ;
Nor aught beside of prospect, grove, or song,
Dim grottoes, gleaming lakes, and fountain clear.
Here too lives simple truth : plain innocence ;
Unsullied beauty ; sound, unbroken youth,
Patient of labor, with a little pleased ;
Health ever blooming ; unambitious toil."

It has been my privilege and happiness to have seen beautiful examples of rural piety. Indeed, the deepest early impressions of reverence I can recall were made by a near relative, who was a farmer. Born in the early part of the last century, remembering the rebellion of 1745, he was an old man before I could know him. The weight of nearly fourscore years and ten had not bent his form, which was still straight as a lance ; but his voice was low and tremulous, his step short and feeble, and his long spare locks as white as driven snow. His appearance was at all times venerable ; but at the table, when seated beside his aged partner, bowed down and blind with years—also a devout Christian, though of stern mould, who fasted one whole day each week, nor ever told husband or children, why—his manner when he asked the blessing rose into the sublime. Uncovering his aged head, taking off the broad bonnet which, the fashion of his early days, he wore to the last, he turned his face upwards with an expression of deep solemnity. There was a moment's silence, as if he was gathering up all his mind to enter the presence of a Heavenly Majesty. And when the blessing came forth in slow, and solemn, and trembling accents, what a contrast it afforded to the mumbled, curt, hurried "For what we are

to receive, the Lord make us thankful," we often hear! The words were few and well chosen; but there was that in the old man's voice, face, and manner, which communicated feelings of solemnity even to thoughtless childhood—the venerable worshipper looking like one that stood before the throne, and saw the august Being whom he addressed.

These early impressions of rural piety were not impaired by the seven years I spent as the minister of a country parish. Numbering about a thousand inhabitants, there was only one man of the whole number who did not attend the house of God—and he was half crazy; there was also but one of years to read who could not—and he was no native, but an interloper; and among the common people there was not one who could properly be called a drunkard—not even the old soldier, who occasionally exceeded on pension-day. With a parish library, both secular and religious, resorted to by many readers; with a parish savings'-bank, set on foot to promote habits of temperance and economy, in which I left, on being called to Edinburgh, many hundred pounds, the savings of honest industry; with a church, and besides a number of Sunday, two day schools, we were more than a match for the one public-house, which, situated, fortunately for us, on our boundary, drew most of its money from the tipplers of the neighboring town. There I learned to love the country, and form a high estimate of the kindness and sobriety, of the virtues and piety, of a well-ordered rural population. "The lines had fallen to me in pleasant places." The moral aspects were much in harmony with the phy-

sical of a scene where the fields yielded abundant harvests, and the air, loaded with the fragrant perfume of flowers, rung to the song of larks and woodland birds, and long lines of breakers gleamed and boomed upon the shore, and ships with white sails flecked the blue ocean, and the Bell Rock tower stood up on its rim to shoot cheerful beams athwart the gloom of night ; a type of that Church which, our guide to the desired haven, is founded on a rock, and fearless of the rage of storms.

Ruth the Virtuous.

APART from the interest which belongs to a noble character and romantic fortunes, the story of Ruth is interesting for the light it throws on her country and the manners of her age. It appears that Canaan, the land of her adoption, had suffered one of those famines which are the scourge of tropical and semi-tropical climes. Indeed, the Book of Ruth opens with one; and it is on it, in God's providence, the tale turns. No scourge in the hand of the Almighty, neither pestilence nor the sword, is more terrible than famine. Look at the prophet's picture of a starving people—"Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick; they that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger, for they pine away stricken through for want of the fruits of the earth; the hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children; they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people." Or look at the spectacle which met Elijah's eyes on his approach to Zarephath!—a woman wasted to a skeleton; picking up, as she totters along with slow and feeble steps, a few sticks to prepare her own and her son's last earthly

meal. Or look at Orissa, in our Indian empire, where last year the sides of the roads and streets were covered with the dead and dying; and a million of our fellow-subjects perished of starvation through the failure of their crops. Our gratitude may find food in famines; and such scenes may well reconcile us to the chilling fogs, and cutting winds, and cold stormy winters of a land where an equable and moderate climate crowns the labors of the husbandman, and exempts its inhabitants from horrors amid which "children cry for bread, and their mothers have none to give them."

Happily unfamiliar with the scourge that drove Naomi and her husband to the land of Moab—where the whole family were to find bread, and the two sons to find wives—this Book presents us with a very familiar scene; nor any more pleasant to look on. Here, when autumn has tinted the woods, and mornings are bright and bracing, and the dews hang, sparkling like liquid diamonds, on bush and tree, is a field crowded with joyous reapers, behind whom, as armed with peaceful steel they go down in lines on the golden corn, come straggling gleaners—God's peculiar care—the poor, the infirm, widowed women, orphans, and little children. Ere Poor-laws came to dry up, and changes in agriculture to divert from their old channels, many a stream of charity, such were the scenes our own fields presented; and it was a spectacle creditable to humanity, and to those who gave the poor free scope to roam and glean among the stubble. But observe that yonder, where Ruth and others follow the reapers, they

have not to ask permission. They have a right to glean ; nor dare any churlish Nabal drive them from his field, as trespassers. This is one of many beautiful and touching instances of God's pity for the poor. He who made the heavens and the earth made statutes in Israel for their special protection. By these they had a right at law to glean—to enter field or vineyard, and eat their full—to gather the crop that grew in the corners of the corn-fields—to claim the whole produce of the land in its every seventh year of rest. Reminded of such beneficent laws, may we not glean another lesson from the story of the gleaner?—this, namely, that though these arrangements, being Jewish, are not binding on us as Christians, yet, as Christians, we ought to cherish their spirit, and see God, in His care for the widow, the fatherless and the friendless, the stranger and the orphan, setting us an example that we should follow His steps.

The simple as well as kindly manners of Ruth's days, as they also are brought out in her history, lend it a peculiar interest. The claims of a common brotherhood, overlying all conventional distinctions, were acknowledged then as they are not now. With a piety foreign to the spirit of the French Revolution, there was much of what its leaders professed to aim at, and described by the Shibboleth of Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality. See in yonder field with what kind familiarity Boaz bears himself to his servants ; more, indeed, like a father, or a friend, than a master. He accosts them with his blessing ; and they bless him in return. Many of our small farmers have to undergo the toil, and are little raised above the

rank of servants—and were, perhaps, happier if they were servants. But Boaz, unlike these, is a man of mark in the country—"a mighty man of wealth," the Bible calls him. Yet, so far from treating those who serve him as the clods among his feet, he sits down to eat with them; and, too good and great a man to sacrifice the claims of humanity to a false pride and fancied dignity, he invites even the poor gleaner to draw near, and share in the common meal. Thousands now-a-days are brought to poverty by their improvidence, and not a few by their dissipated habits; but in these old and more virtuous times poverty was justly regarded as a misfortune rather than a crime; and so, Ruth, at Boaz's invitation, takes her place in the circle where "he sat beside the reapers." There, instead of commanding his servants to help her, he himself supplies her wants--knowing how much more that would enhance the kindness. It is said "he reached her parched corn;" and, supplied by no niggard hand, such as in some houses weighs out the servants' food, "she did eat, and was sufficed, and left."

There was a time, also, in our own country when, with certain distinctive arrangements of place and food, master and servants sat at the same board; and by this primitive custom, as they elsewhere and at another table recognized each other as brethren in Christ, recognized each other as brethren in Adam—equally the children of Him who hath made of one blood all the families of the earth. This was a kindly old custom. I am not aware that it weakened the authority of masters, or fostered pride and pre-

sumption in their servants; and it may admit of question whether the change of manners which has placed the two classes so far apart has been for the benefit of either—has to any extent compensated for the lack of those kindly feelings and that mutual interest which used to subsist between them, for

“The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for meed.”

In the old times of Ruth, before national corruption came in with national wealth, the morals of the people seem to have been as pure as their habits were temperate, and their manners simple. Had it been otherwise, would Naomi have exposed her daughter-in-law to such an interview as she held with Boaz—alone on the threshing-floor, and under the cloud of night? No doubt a marriage between him and Ruth would have greatly promoted her interest as well as her daughter-in-law's. There have been mothers so debased as to traffic with their daughters' virtue; and others, hardly less criminal, who, for the sake of higher wages or the chance of an advantageous marriage, have exposed their principles and their persons to imminent danger of contamination. But, whatever the loose principles of some mothers, unless the age in which Naomi lived had been distinguished by purity of morals as well as by simplicity of manners, I cannot believe that this venerable and virtuous matron would have ventured on what had been a very perilous experiment. Admitting this, as in justice to Naomi we should, I am not prepared, though God overruled it for the good

of all parties, to justify the step she took. And supposing it could be justified, if we knew all that was peculiar to her time and circumstances, her conduct would form no precedent, no example for others to follow. Our rule is not the example of Naomi, or the success of her experiment, but this plain word of God—"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." We are never to forget that, in respect of all sins, our safety ordinarily lies in keeping out of the way of temptation—not in fighting the devil, but in fleeing from him—in avoiding the approach as well as "the appearance of evil"—in carefully acting up to the spirit of the petition, "Lead us not into temptation!" We walk in slippery places. And such as do so have need to take care how they walk; ever praying, "Lord, hold up my goings, that my footsteps slip not!"

The part Ruth acted in the affair of her interview with Boaz presents a state of matters and of manners very different from ours. Indeed, were a woman now-a-days to use such a liberty, her conduct would be justly pronounced not improper only, but immodest—since modesty is the handmaid of virtue, very strange, at least, in a woman of unsullied reputation. Such was Ruth's: "All the city of my people," said Boaz, "doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."

To form a proper estimate of her conduct in this transaction, we must not only take into account that she, a stranger to the habits of the people, acted under the advice of an aged and pious matron, but that, according to the Mosaic law, as appears from the twenty-fifth chapter of Deuter-

onomy, she was entitled, if not required, to claim marriage at the hand of her dead husband's nearest kinsman, as, ignorant that another was nearer, she believed Boaz to be. Nor can she be justly blamed for claiming a right which God sanctioned, if He did not positively enjoin. Why the overture made to Boaz was not made in other, and what would seem more prudent, circumstances, I cannot say. To us it appears a strange step she took in seeking him in a lonely place, and at the midnight hour. There may have been reasons for it of which we are ignorant. Perhaps it was the custom of the country. If so, it was one certainly not to be commended. However, let justice be done to Ruth. Her whole conduct, and that also of Boaz, in their perilous circumstances, is eminently pure and honorable; nor does her reply to his question, though it sound strange in our ears, form any exception to that remark. Waking at the dead of night, by the faint light of harvest-moon or stars, he sees the dim form of a woman stretched out at his feet. Starting up amazed, he cries, "Who art thou?"—a question which, no doubt expecting, she answers, saying, "I am Ruth;" adding, "Spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman." *Evil to him who evil thinks.* In this speech no immodesty stains the lips of Ruth, or casts the breath of suspicion on her character. Every country has customs, and modes of expression, peculiar to itself; and this which she employed was that followed by the Jewish women when in circumstances akin to hers, they claimed marriage of their nearest

kinsman—the rights, in fact, of the living and the dead.

The marriage that resulted from this strange, short courtship presents another phase of the simple manners of these early days. While Roman Catholics, though advocating celibacy, exalt marriage into a sacrament, and others, who do not go that length, regard it as an ordinance where the hand of priest, or presbyter, is required to tie the knot, Boaz and Ruth went about forming this connexion after the simplest fashion; and in a way, I may remark, quite in harmony with the spirit of the marriage-law of Scotland. The morning succeeding their interview, he seats himself at the city-gate. The man who was a degree more nearly related to Ruth than he, approaches to pass out. His steps are suddenly arrested. "Ho! such-an-one," cries Boaz; "turn aside, and sit down here!" When he had done so, with ten of the elders of the city as witnesses and judges in the cause, Boaz relates the matter in hand; and as this man had at law a prior claim to Ruth's hand, he offers her in marriage to him. He declines to avail himself of his rights; and thus leaves the way clear for Boaz. He himself now claims her; and she consents. The elders with the people being taken to witness that they become man and wife with their free, mutual, honest consent, they are married. That constitutes the marriage. However proper may be our custom of accompanying marriage with religious services, there was on that occasion no such ceremony; nothing more than the blessing, not of any ecclesiastic, but of the elders and people, who say, "The Lord

make the woman who is to come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel ; and do thou worthily in Ephratah and be famous in Bethlehem !”

This blessing on their nuptials was answered in a way none present perhaps ever dreamt of—events hanging on the marriage that had been so lovingly yet simply entered on, which still direct the steps of travellers to its scene, and have made the city of Ruth and Boaz famous in the annals of time, and in the everlasting memories of eternity. It was here that David, Ruth’s great-grandson, tended his father’s sheep. The hills around heard the first feeble notes of the harp that banished the evil spirit from the breast of Saul, and has charmed the Church of God, through successive ages, with its inspired and sacred melodies. These hills saw the brave boy encounter both the lion and the bear ; and, as he plucked the prey from their bloody jaws, win victories that were his confidence when, accepting the challenge of the giant, he said, “ The Lord that delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.” But Ruth was the ancestress, and Bethlehem the birthplace, of a greater than David. There, the Son of God drew his first breath ; there, the Sun of Righteousness arose on a benighted world, with healing in his wings ; there, the fountain of salvation, the waters of which if a man drink he shall never thirst more, sprung up sparkling into the light of day. It was in the city where Ruth was married, the Saviour of the world was born : it was among these hills the shepherds watched their

flocks by night ; it was over the very fields trodden by this gleaner's feet, the glory of the Lord shone forth, and the midnight sky suddenly became filled with angels, and mortal ears heard those immortals sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

But from the scenery and incidents of the story let us now turn to her who is its principal character. Honored above all others of her sex, she is the only woman that gives her name to a Scripture Book—a famous queen excepted, whose life, equally characterized by remarkable interpositions of providence, was even still more romantic. Though Ruth's career was certainly less brilliant than Esther's, her story is more instructive ; more suggestive of useful lessons to the mass of readers. Esther moved in a palace ; but Ruth playing her part on the common stage of life, teaches thousands how to act, who have no chance of rising to royal dignity, and to whom, unless in so far as they illustrate a presiding Providence, it is a matter of indifference by what steps a beautiful slave became the choice of a king and the partner of his throne. Besides, such beauty as adorned Esther and opened her way to fortune, is a gift bestowed on few ; but all may aspire after, and, through the grace of God, attain to the virtues of Ruth—virtues which raise many a straw-thatched cottage in true dignity above lordly mansions, and throw a moral glory around the humble head which poverty can neither eclipse nor obscure. Not that, dazzled by her beauty, I am insensible to the noble qualities of Esther, or deem her to have been unworthy of her brilliant fortunes. Unlike many

that, so soon as they rise in the world, forget the rock whence they were hewn, she, noble woman, perilled crown and life to save her people ; saying, as with pale resolution on her jewelled brow she passed uninvited into the presence of the king, " If I perish, I perish ! " Still I regard Ruth's history—though less sensational and fascinating to the mere lovers of romance—as more instructive, in this, that her virtues formed the foundations of her fortune. These, not the beauty that fascinates but fades, won the regard of Boaz, and were the steps in God's providence by which the gleaner of his fields rose to be the wife of his bosom, and the mistress of his house.

Nor won his regard only ; for her virtues appear to have been the talk and admiration of all the town. Years before Naomi had returned to Bethlehem, a spectacle to wonder at, her neighbors had seen her leave it in affluence. With a husband at her side, and at her back two gallant sons, she was an object of envy to many who, having no means to fly the famine, remained at home to suffer. But they who had envied, lived to pity her. Years thereafter, a rumor that Naomi has returned runs through the streets of Bethlehem ; and the people hasten to their doors to see an instance, as sad as eyes could look on, of the hollowness of all earthly things. Slowly, feebly, downcast and forlorn, her form bent under the weight of years, poverty hanging on her back, many sorrows written in her face, and the fountains of her great grief all opened anew by the painful recollections the scene awakens—Naomi goes up the street, leaning on the arm of another though younger

widow. Old neighbors recognize her ; yet hardly believe their own eyes—their only salutation one of astonishment, and grief, and pity: “Is this Naomi?” As might be expected, and would certainly happen in any small town or village, an event so remarkable became the topic of universal interest and conversation. Naomi’s fortunes, with the name, relationship, character, and conduct of the stranger, her companion, were eagerly inquired into, and discussed. And all who know anything of the gossip of such places, will regard it as creditable to the people of Bethlehem, and a very high testimony to the virtues of Ruth, that, poor and a stranger, a daughter of Moab and of heathen descent, she came out of this ordeal like gold untarnished by the fire. *The king’s chaff is better than other people’s corn*, says a proverb: and “the destruction of the poor,” says the wise man, “is their poverty.” But though according to these adages it usually depreciates merits which wealth and rank enhance, poverty cannot obscure Ruth’s remarkable virtues. Borrowing lustre from its depth as stars from the darkness of night, these rose on the town to attract universal notice and admiration: “All the city of my people,” said Boaz, “doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.”

Observe, to begin with, one of her humblest virtues, Ruth’s *industry*.

She accompanies Naomi to the land of Israel ; but not to live on public charity, or to become the humble pensioner of affluent relatives. Reared in the lap of luxury, she has never learned to work ; yet in a noble spirit of independence, she resolves

to earn her bread with her own hands — and Naomi's too. It is work, not charity, she asks. The bread of beggary, like that of infamy, she holds in scorn. Her ambition is to be able to hold up hands, once white and delicate, but now rough with honest labor, and say, as St. Paul did afterwards, "These have ministered to my necessities." Brave woman, let the world learn from thee that spirit of industry and of independence which is a Christian virtue, having the sanction of Him who said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" and not a virtue only, but the guardian of other virtues—preserving men from meanness and dishonesty, and women from that love of idleness which makes many a poor, fallen, wretched creature prefer the gains of infamy to the wages of honest labor.

We have called this a humble virtue, not because we hold it cheap, or do not regret that under the debasing influence of our poor-laws and the self-indulgent spirit of the age, it is dying out of the land. One of the saddest phases of the times is, that, for themselves or their parents, thousands now accept and even clamor for public charity who, less than a century ago, would have scorned to touch it—the old spirit of our country, that of the Trojan who took his aged father on his back, and bore him on his shoulders through the burning city. We call it a humble virtue, because, notwithstanding the degeneracy of the age, it still dwells in many a lowly home; stamping those with a true nobility who feel the bread taste sweet their own hands have earned, and, looking forward with a Christian's hope to the rest of heaven, are content

here to live to work and work to live. Cheered by Ruth's example, and sustained in patience by the grace of God, let the sons of honest toil work on. There is "rest for the weary." The sweat of death is the last that shall gather on their brows. Let them wait. "Blessed," as was said to Daniel, "is he that waiteth; therefore go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

Observe next her *humility*.

On losing their fortune some retain in a silly pride what but aggravates the loss; rankling like a thorn in a bleeding wound. An empty sack cannot stand erect; yet they inflict misery on themselves, and not seldom wrong on others, by the mean and even dishonest things they do to keep up appearances. Deeming some honest but humble work beneath their dignity, they buy what they cannot pay for, or borrow what they cannot return. Ashamed to work, they are not ashamed to live on the fruits of others' industry, rather than their own. There is something inexpressibly mean in this; and worse than mean. It argues a spirit of rebellion against Him and His providence who setteth up one and putteth down another; the wickedness of Ajax's heart, without the sublimity of his action, when, offended with the gods, he raised his broken sword and shook it against the heavens. How different from this unchristian and rebellious spirit the humility of Ruth? How beautiful it is! Willing to engage in any honest work, however humble, she bends like a reed to the blast; bows her gentle head meekly before the majesty of heaven; and, meeting her trials like a Christian

heroine, drinks off the cup mingled and presented by her Father's hand. Her blessed frame and spirit His who said, "Not my will, but thine be done, O Father," she wipes the tear from her eye, and suppressing each rising regret, goes forth to glean in fields till better work might offer, and better days should dawn. Nor when she went out to work, leaving the old saint at home to pray, were these far distant. The God and Husband of the widow had his eye on her, as he has on all who love and put their trust in Him; "for the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor shall not perish forever." Taking her by the hand, God leads her blindfold, as it were, to the field of Boaz; by-and-by, as she opens her sparkling and grateful eyes on an unexpected fortune, to find herself the wife of a mighty man of wealth, and mistress of the servants behind whom she had stooped to glean. Like some turtle dove that had left the neighboring wood, where it sat mourning for its mate, to drop with other feathered creatures on the stubble, "her hap," the story says, "was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz." But as the old adage says, *What haps God directs*; and from the fortune to which her humility conducted Ruth, we may learn to humble ourselves in the sight both of God and man. "Be clothed with humility," is a good advice both for this world and the next. To stoop is the way to rise—our Saviour, in these words, laying down the law both of God's natural and gracious government: "Who-soever exalteth himself shall be humbled, and who-soever humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Observe her *affection* to Naomi.

Who shall reign? is a question that has given birth to intestine wars in houses as well as kingdoms; nor has the point in dispute always been whether the house should resemble a beehive, where the sovereign is a queen, and not a king. Between those who stood in the same relationship as Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah, the love of power has bred unhappy quarrels; and through that ambition, through conflicting interests, through incongruity of disposition or other causes, many a house has been divided against itself—not Christ, but the devil of an ill-temper, having “set the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” And it speaks much for the wives of her sons, as well as for Naomi herself, that their home in the land of Moab was the abode of mutual and affectionate confidence. A prudent, kind, tender, pious matron, she had won not the respect only, nor the affection, but the warmest attachments of her daughters-in-law. One in heart, when death had desolated their home, and laid in the dust the support around which each had clung, like plants of woodbine that the rude storm, tearing from their stays, has thrown on the ground, they intertwined their arms, and clung in close embraces to each other.

How long the three widows mourned and wept, and mingled their griefs together, as they had once their joys, in the land of Moab, I know not; but the time came when its daughters must part from Moab, or from Naomi. She had fled to that godless land to escape the famine, and not in wrath but love. God had pursued her with a heavier judgment—her case that of “a man who

flees from a lion, and a bear meets him ; or leans his hand on the wall, and a serpent bites him." Those she sought to save by carnal policy snatched from her arms by the hand of death, she comes to see her error, and to bewail it ; and happy all those who, when earthly homes are desolated and fondly cherished hopes lie buried in the dust, are brought to seek better hopes and a better home ! It was so with Naomi. In her affliction her heart turns away from Moab, back to the people and country of her God. She resolves to retrace her steps. Nor will Orpah and Ruth allow her to go alone. They will leave their kindred and country ; and paying a farewell visit to the graves of the dead, will share her fortunes. Each lending an arm, they will sustain her between them ; and though unable to soothe her sorrows any more than their own, they will mingle their tears with hers. Naomi is not behind them in generosity. Burthened with a load of grief and years, her spirits sink with her strength under the fatigues of the way ; or some dark cloud comes across her faith ; any way her fortunes appearing as a sinking ship to remain in which is for her daughters-in-law to perish, she persuades them to return. Perhaps she did so to try them—just as Jesus bade the man who seemed ready to follow him to sell all he had ; or it was to warn them,—as in addressing his disciples, He foreboded persecution, and set the worst before them.

Orpah's courage fails. She loved Naomi, as many do Christ, but not better than herself—not with a passion that is stronger than death. She kisses, and weeps ; and yet she parts--re-

mind us, as she goes and casts many a lingering look behind, of him who left Jesus, though sorrowful ; drawn off by his great possessions. Not so Ruth. This was the crisis of her fate—that hour and moment of life on which her destiny shall turn ; and such there is in every one's life—coming to the lost on some occasion when they reject the offer of a Saviour, and to God's chosen people at that happy, hallowed hour when, no longer halting between two opinions, they close with the offers of mercy. Moved no doubt by the Spirit of God, Ruth was equal to the crisis and the occasion. She stays when her sister leaves. Naomi advises, urges, entreats her also to go ; and calling in example to the aid of precept, points to the form of Orpah disappearing in the distance. It wrings Ruth's heart to part with sister, mother, and country ; but it would break it to part with Naomi. She cannot do it. So, passionately throwing herself into Naomi's arms, or kneeling at her feet, and looking up with hands clasped and eyes brimful of tears, she breaks out into this touching, overpowering burst of affection—" Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee ; for whither thou goest, I will go ; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge ; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God : where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried : the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me !" The ship may sink ; but, nailing her colors to the mast, she will sink or swim with it. Death only shall part them : nor death—the last favor her lips shall ask, that they lay her in Naomi's grave.

Nobly did Ruth redeem the pledges of this affecting scene. Not ashamed of Naomi's poverty, lending her young arm to support her aged form, with her own hands earning her bread, cheering the lonely home, honoring the poor old saint as if she had been a queen, cherishing her as if she had been a lover, nursing her as if she were a helpless infant, living for her as if she was all the world to her, Ruth sets us an example of love and sympathy, of unselfish, devoted, generous affection, that, were it universal, with piety to God reigning in every house, would almost banish sorrow from the earth, and restore the days of Eden.

She does more. She teaches us, by what she was to Naomi, what we are to be to Christ; how we should cleave to Him—how we should love Him—with what devotion of heart and body, of soul, strength, mind, and spirit, we should serve Him, and gladly spend and be spent for Him—saying, as we take up our cross to follow the lover and redeemer of our souls, "Where thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God shall be my God." Noblest and purest and truest of women, born of a heathen race, but more Christian than most Christians, and thyself a pledge of the coming of the Gentiles, monument of Divine grace and fair pattern of the most attractive piety, mother of the great and good, and ancestress of an incarnate God; well may we say, in taking leave of thee—**MANY DAUGHTERS HAVE DONE VIRTUOUSLY, BUT THOU EXCELLEST THEM ALL!**

Gideon the Deliberer.

A VALLEY abandoned to solitude, however picturesque and beautiful, wears a melancholy air. Its loneliness and silence are so oppressive, as well as impressive, that we should be glad to hear a dog bark, or a cock crow, or in the blue smoke that wreaths up against gray crag or brown hill-side, see some sign of human life. The feelings, allied to sadness, such a scene produces, are deepened by the green spots we ever and anon light on, marked by nettles, a clump of decaying trees, and some crumbling ruins. These ruins were once happy homes; children played on that daisy-sward; gray patriarchs sat under the shadow of these aged trees; hospitable fires blazed on these cold hearths; and from these roofless walls the voice of joy and gladness, of praise and prayer, echoed in other days.

But the land of Israel, when Gideon was raised up to be its deliverer, presented a yet sadder aspect. The forests into which some, and the sheep-walks into which many, of our highland glens have been turned, are indications of national wealth—the fruits, legitimate or not, of long peace and great prosperity; and to relieve, if not altogether change, the painful feelings a depopulated valley is apt to awaken, one has only to transport

himself in imagination to the smiling homes amid the tangled forests and verdant prairies of America, where so many of our emigrants have exchanged perpetual poverty for the comforts of life. No such happy fortune, however, was the lot of the Israelites when their land became a scene of desolation ; presenting an aspect sadder than roofless ruins and lonely sheep-walks. The houses were there, but no children played about the doors ; the fields, but they bore no crops ; the pastures, but they fed no cattle ; the hills, but they bleated with no flocks of sheep ; and the people also, but more unfortunate than our countrymen, whom other lands receive when their own casts them out, they possessed no homes but such as they found in caves, and dens, and mountain crags. To this extremity had the country been reduced by the invasions of the host of Midian. With occasional periods of relaxation, and exceptional cases such as Gideon's, during seven long, weary years its wretched inhabitants had suffered—for disease always treads on the heels of want—the three-fold scourge of war, pestilence, and famine.

It were difficult to imagine a more painful contrast than that between the condition of Israel in these days and the prospects of their fathers on entering the land of Canaan. "Blessed," said Moses in his parting address to the tribes before they entered the promised land, "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field ; blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep : blessed shall be thy basket and thy

store ; blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face ; and the Lord shall command the blessings upon thee in all that thou settest thine hand unto." What a shower of blessings—in the form of promises ! and if anything could have comforted the people for the loss of Moses, it was the prospect of entering on such a splendid career of peace and prosperity as this picture presented. Nothing more beautiful than the picture ; but, alas ! contrasted with the future sorrows and sufferings of the nation, apparently not more unsubstantial the visions of a dream—the brilliant arch that vanishes in the storm, whose dark cloud it spans. It seemed as if the people had "looked for peace, but no good came ; and for a time of health, and behold trouble." No wonder, therefore, that when the angel appeared to Gideon by the oak at Ophrah, accosting him with these hopeful words, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor," his answer expressed the deepest disappointment. Looking around him on the desolation of his country, and at that moment in terror lest the Midianities should appear before he had got his corn threshed, and buried out of their sight ; no wonder that, in such melancholy circumstances, he returned this melancholy reply, "O my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us ?—the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

But whatever reasons Gideon and his count ymen had to mourn, they had none to murmur or

cast blame on God. He had not failed in one jot or tittle of all he spake to their fathers by the lips of Moses ; nor did their deserted homesteads, and ravaged fields, and empty stalls, and silent hills, belong to those mysteries of Providence it baffles the wisest to solve.

First, as to the question, "If the Lord be with us, why hath this befallen us?" that was easily answered. It finds a solution—a clear, sufficient answer—in the words with which Moses prefaced his series of beatitudes, the nail on which that string of pearls was suspended—"All these blessings," he said, "shall come on thee and overtake thee, *if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.*" They had not done so ; nor was proof of that far to seek. It rose there, near by the threshing-floor, insulting God, in an altar erected to the worship of Baal, though the Lord had commanded them, saying, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Secondly, as to Gideon's complaint, "The Lord hath forsaken us," their trials proved the contrary. They are bastards, not sons, that grow up without chastisement—they are common, not precious stones, that escape the lapidary's wheel—they are wild, not garden trees, that never bleed beneath the pruning-knife. "Whom God loveth," says the Apostle, "He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that He receiveth." Others, I may remark, besides Gideon, but with less reason or excuse, have fallen into his mistake. Nor when blow succeeds blow, and trials, like foaming waves, break on the back of trials, and we look on them through the dim and distorting medium of our tears, is the

complaint unnatural, "The Lord hath forgotten me, my Lord hath forsaken me." Nevertheless it is a mistake, and a great mistake—a feeling that should be resisted by the people of God, since it tends to defeat his gracious purpose, and aggravate instead of alleviating the sufferings by which he seeks to sanctify, and draw them more closely to himself. God has no other object than these in afflicting his children; nor is it possible for fancy to imagine anything more touching, or tender, than the manner in which, as one hurt by their unworthy suspicions, He replies, "Can a mother forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb? She may forget: yet will not I forget thee. I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, and thy walls are continually before me!"

To prepare the ground for sowing, the husbandman, if I may say so, *afflicts* it—he drives a ploughshare through its bosom, and tears asunder its clods with iron teeth. Similar was the purpose for which God afflicted Israel by the hand of Midian. That object accomplished, as the sower follows the ploughman to cast seed into the furrows his share has drawn, God sent a prophet to preach to his people. With a rock for his pulpit, with repentance for his text, and for his church some mountain hollow, where ghastly crowds, creeping from their caves, assembled to hear him, this preacher set forth their sins as the cause of their sorrows; calling them to repentance. Nor, such a forerunner of Gideon as John Baptist was of Christ, did he call in vain. Tears course down the furrows of famished cheeks. The voice of

suffering ascends to heaven sanctified by the voice of sorrow ; confessions of penitence mingle with groans of pain ; the caves and dens they had turned into dwellings, they turn into oratories ; and now another ear than the rocks hears their prayers—the cry, “ How long, O Lord, how long ? ” The set time is come. Past that darkest hour which precedes the dawn. Heaven’s gate is thrown open ; and an angel leaving it, cleaves his way earthward to raise up in Gideon one who should break the yoke of Midian, and rise the Deliverer of the oppressed.

Such was the order of God’s government and dealings then ; and such, it is important to observe, it is still. The people of Israel were to be relieved of their sorrows, but not till they had repented of their sins. Penitence must precede peace. Sins not repented of are sins not forgiven : and since true joy is as certainly born of godly sorrow as bright days of gray mornings, or rather day itself of the dark womb of night, they, therefore, who fancy themselves forgiven the sins which they have never sorrowed for, only deceive themselves—saying, “ Peace, peace !—when no peace is to be found.”

The story of Gideon is written for our instruction. Nor will it have been written in vain if, seeking to obtain deliverance from the bondage of sin and, to use Paul’s words, “ work out our salvation,” we take him as a pattern. Copying and cultivating the qualities which contributed so materially to his success, let us enter on our own battles in the spirit of his famous cry, “ The sword of the Lord and Gideon ! ” Assuming that my readers know

the details of the history, and the remarkable way in which he delivered Israel, I observe—

Gideon teaches us to be humble, and self-distrustful.

In his history the curtain rises on a scene of obscure and humble life—a threshing-floor, in some sequestered nook, where we see a man, to beat out the grain, driving bullocks round and round over some corn. It has happily escaped the pillage of the Midianites, and he intends to conceal it in the ground for further safety. This countryman is Gideon—the future deliverer and judge of Israel ; and that his humble task. Fired with ambition, it might have been natural for him to leave such obscure employments to others ; and, panting to deliver his country and also distinguish himself, aim at something better suited to his talents and position. “What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor ?” was his question to the conquered and captive kings, Zebah and Zalmunna. “As thou art, so were they ; each one resembled the children of a king,” was their answer. Now this answer, though fatal to themselves (for their victims were Gideon’s brethren), presents his case as one of those where the body seems to take form from the mind it lodges, and to reveal, by a certain nobleness of bearing and expression, the greatness of the soul within. Yet Gideon, though belonging, if we may judge from this, to the order of Nature’s nobility, abandoned himself to no dreams of ambition ; but was called of God from the quiet, diligent, and contented discharge of the humblest duties, to honors and usefulness he never dreamed of. If God should call him to a higher

place, well ; if not, also well. In this combination of a humble disposition and a brilliant destiny, Gideon was by no means singular. He is one of a constellation of men who have emerged from obscurity and the contented discharge of humble offices to shine as stars. Christ's call, for example, found Matthew at the receipt of custom ; Simon and Andrew, James and John, mending their nets on the shores of Galilee. Moses got his call when discharging the duties of a shepherd in the land of Midian ; and David his, when, a dutiful son, he herded his father's flocks on the hills of Bethlehem. It is the busy, not the idle, not such as are dissatisfied, but contented with their lot, and do its duties well, whom God usually calls to posts of honor and of distinguished usefulness.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit”—the astonishing exclamation with which our Lord opened His Sermon on the Mount, and at once took his hearers captive—finds no more appropriate illustration than Gideon offers. “The Lord be with thee, thou mighty man of valor”—the words with which the heavenly messenger first accosted him—had fallen on a self-confident and ambitious spirit like a spark on a train of gunpowder—setting it in a blaze, firing it instantly up. And had such been Gideon's temper, to the call, “Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel ; have not I sent thee ?” how had he leapt up ; and, casting away the ox-goad to draw the sword, with the blare of trumpet summoned his country to arms ? But, a humble, modest, self-distrustful man, he is overwhelmed with the magnitude of the task. Measuring it and himself, the difference is such that he deems it

hopeless ; and eager to escape from an enterprise in which he can anticipate nothing but certain failure, he cries, "O, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh ; and I am the least in my father's house !" Few have so thrust office and honor away. Nor does he venture to accept them till assured by a miracle that his call is from heaven—till he sees fire flash from the cold rock, and the angel, at whose touch it came, leap on the altar, and ascend to heaven in its flames.

History offers many remarkable parallels ; but none perhaps more remarkable than that between the self-distrust and diffidence of Moses and the self-distrust and diffidence of Gideon. In this they present a remarkable and instructive contrast to the ready confidence with which the disciples of our Lord—by nature very inferior men—responded to His call. It was from no aversion to the work that both Moses the leader, and Gideon the deliverer, of Israel shrunk from it ; but from the very humble estimate they had formed of their own powers. The disciples seem to have been troubled with no such scruples ; but the contrary. Their mutual jealousies and unseemly strifes for precedence argued a self-sufficient spirit. So strong was this in Simon that swelling waves and roaring storm were not formidable enough to deter him from an attempt to rival his Master, and also walk upon the sea—in Thomas, that when Jesus by repairing to Bethany was to put his life in jeopardy, troubled with no misgiving, he said, "Let us go also and die with him"—in the whole band, that amid the dangers of that ever-memorable night in

which our Lord was betrayed, they made professions heroic and brave as Peter's, declaring, "We will die with thee rather than deny thee!"

But the contrast between the spirit and temper in which Moses and Gideon on the one hand, and the disciples on the other, entered on their respective vocations, is not more remarkable than that between the manner in which they filled them. With Moses returning to the court of Pharaoh, to beard the haughty tyrant, where he sits armed with imperial power, and surrounded by those that obey his nod, compare Simon Peter, cowering before a woman's eye, and skulking away from observation, and her questions, into the darkness of the night. With Gideon advancing at the head of a handful of men against the whole host of Midian, or hanging in pursuit on their flying columns, compare the disciples as, struck with terror, they scatter, and fly from the garden where they have left their Master a prisoner in the hands of his cruel enemies. From these cases how should we learn that our strength lies in our weakness—in our sense of it—in what fosters that frame of mind which Paul expressed by this remarkable paradox, "When I am weak, then am I strong." The self-distrust which cries to God for help, and works out salvation with fear and trembling; which, casting away all confidence in an arm of flesh, clings to the arm of Jesus; which says with Moses, "Unless thou go with us, let us not go up," and with Jacob, "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me;" like the army which, drawn out in battle array, was seen to first fall on its knees in prayer,—this is the sure presage, not of defeat, but of victory. In the self-

distrust which prompts to prayer, and makes a man cast himself on God, and substitute for human weakness the power of a Divine omnipotence, we may say as Samson did of his unshorn locks, "In that our great strength lies."

Gideon teaches us the importance of having our faith strengthened.

Any means Gideon possessed for accomplishing the work he had undertaken, were, humanly speaking, altogether inadequate. He had not a chance of success, if it could be said with truth, "There is no hope for him in God." Faith being then, as faith is still, the medium of connection between human weakness and Divine power, it was his mainstay. He was thrown entirely on its strength. The ship does not ride the storm otherwise than by the hold her anchor takes of the solid ground. By that, which lies in the calm depths below, as little moved by the waves that swell, and roll, and foam above, as by the winds that lash them into fury, she resists the gale, and rides the billows of the stormiest sea. But her safety depends on something else also. When masts are struck and sails are furled, and, anchored off reef or rocky shore, she is laboring in the wild tumult for her life, it likewise lies in the strength of her cable and of the iron arms that grasp the solid ground. By these she hangs to it; and thus not only the firm earth, but their strength also is her security. Let the flukes of the anchor, or strands of the cable snap, and her fate is sealed. Nothing can avert it. Powerless to resist, and swept forward by the sea, she drives on ruin; and hurled against an iron shore, her timbers are crushed to pieces like a

shell. And what anchor and cable are to her, the faith, by which man makes God's strength his own, was to Gideon; and is still to believers in their times of trial.

Aware of that, and teaching us by his example a lesson of the highest practical importance, Gideon prepared for his enterprise by seeking to have his faith strengthened; deeming that of such transcendent consequence as to ask, what God kindly granted, a miracle—ay, two miracles!—to strengthen it. The time was coming to him—as probably in sore temptations and heavy trials, and certainly in the awful hour of death, it shall come to us—when he would have to stand face to face with difficulties no mere human energy could overcome, and dangers no mere human fortitude could meet. There could be no help for him then in man; and should his faith fail, there was none in God. Before the terrible figure of the giant, and in other such circumstances, David said, “I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High;” and so, to feed his courage from a similar source, Gideon wished for something to remember, and to rest on, as proving that God was with him of a truth—something to shine like a star when the night was at the darkest—something to feel like a rock below his feet when the flood was highest.

For that purpose, casting himself on the kindness and compassion of God, he spreads out a fleece on the floor, saying, “If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, let there be dew on the fleece only; but let it be dry on all the earth beside.” It fell out as he wished. With foot that leaves no trace, or trail, upon the grass, he goes next morning to examine

the fleece ; and there it lies all glistening with the dews of night, to yield to his hands, as they wring it out, a bowlful of water. Peter only needed Christ to say, "Come," and, without a thought, or moment's hesitation, he sprang from the boat out on the sea. In Gideon's circumstances he would have at once dropped the fleece to draw the sword, and rush down on the hosts that lay in the valley of Israel like grasshoppers for multitude. Not so Gideon. Perhaps by nature one of those who, like the granite, that is ill to work, but is long to wear, though tenacious of their purpose when it is formed, are slow to form it, he is not yet satisfied. He has heard how much both Abraham and Moses, in their days, ventured to request of God. He also will venture, and ask another miracle. Here it is—"Let not thine anger be hot against me," he says, "I will speak but this once: let it now be dry only on the fleece, and on all the ground let there be dew." Of the two this would be the most obvious miracle—wool being more ready than almost anything else to show signs of dew, as we have observed in beads standing thick on the tufts that furze or thorn had plucked from the passing flock, when grass and ground seemed dry. The request—not on Gideon's part one of presumption, but of self-distrust—is granted : and now he can say with David, and many else, "Thy gentleness has made me great." Next morning sees the whole earth "sown with orient pearl :"
liquid diamonds top the spikes of grass, and hang sparkling in the sunbeams on every bush, as Gideon, with feet bathed at each step in dew, draws near the fleece. He sees it: and has no

more anxiety. No bead glistens on its surface ; nor drop of water falls into the bowl, as, to make assurance doubly sure, he wrings the fleece in his hands. Now, he is all faith. He has no further doubts. Recollecting the miracles of the fleece, he looks unmoved on the swarms of Midian ; unmoved, sees his army of more than thirty thousand men by coward flight diminished to one-third their number ; unmoved, sees the ten thousand, like a snow-wreath on which winds have blown and the sun has beaten, reduced to three hundred men. At the head of so small a band, and with no other instruments of assault but a lamp, and pitcher, and empty trumpet, he stands confident and ready. The fleece is his battle banner. In the faith it has strengthened, if not created, he steals down in the darkness on the sleeping camp. On a sudden—to have them answered by three hundred more—he flashes his light and blows his trumpet, and with his battle cry, “ The sword of the Lord and Gideon ! ” adds to the confusion and carnage of a scene, where the Midianites, seized with a sudden panic, bury their swords in each other’s bosoms.

He had a great work to do. But so has every Christian. With such temptations, perhaps, before us as have proved formidable, if not fatal, to the greatest saints ; with trials to encounter that have wrung complaints from pious lips ; with probably great fights of affliction to endure ; with death and its gloomy terrors certainly to face—we shall need all the faith that pains and prayer can provide. The righteous scarcely are saved : many of them entering the harbor as a vessel that, with masts sprung, and sails torn to ribbons, and bulwarks

gone by the board, bears marks of storm, and danger, and a sore battle for life. Paul himself trembled lest he should be a castaway ; and in view of our trials, we should labor, according to his advice, to make our calling and election sure ; to have the witness of God's Spirit with our own that we have been born again, and have certainly passed from death to life. By communion with God, let us seek to get our faith so strengthened, that its trials may prove its most signal triumphs : and, our spiritual vision growing clearer as our dying eye grows darker, a better world rising to view as this fades from the sight, glory opening over our heads as a grave opens beneath our feet, the voice of angels falling on our ear as it grows dull and duller to all earthly sounds, they who bend over us to catch life's last low whisper may hear us saying, " My heart and my flesh faint and fail ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for evermore."

Gideon teaches us to make thorough work of what belongs to our deliverance from sin.

In closing the account of what God did for him, and through him for his people, the historian says, " Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more." And how was this accomplished ? The remarkable victory God wrought for Gideon, without any effort on his part, may be regarded as a type of that greater, better victory which, without any effort on ours, God's Son wrought for us, when he took our nature and our sins upon him—dying, the just for the unjust, that we might be saved. Gideon followed up this victory by calling all possible re-

sources to his aid. He summoned the whole country to arms, as, accompanied by his famous three hundred men, he hung on the skirts of the broken host, and with sword bathed in their blood cut down the fugitives—kings, princes, captains, and common soldiers, with an eye that knew no pity, and a hand that did not spare. Now it is to work as thorough, and against enemies more formidable, that He who trode the winepress alone, redeeming us to God by his blood, calls all his followers. He has achieved a victory as triumphant; and now an extermination of our sins as thorough as that of Midian is the work that should engage our utmost efforts and inspire all our prayers. Jesus, and He alone, has won the victory and purchased our salvation; but honored to be fellow-laborers with Him and God, we are called to work it out. By resolute self-denial, by constant watchfulness, by earnest prayer, by the diligent use of every means of grace, and above all by the help of the Holy Spirit, we are to labor to cast sin out of our hearts—crucifying it—killing it—thrusting it through and through with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, till its power is broken; and there is no more life in it; and it becomes hideous and hateful as a rotting corpse; and it can be said of the sins that were once our cruel masters and oppressors, *They lift up their heads no more.*

This is no easy work. But heaven is not to be reached by easy-going people. Like a beleaguered city, where men scale the walls and swarm in at the deadly breach, the violent take it by force. **The rest it offers is for the weary.** The crowns it

confers are for warriors' brows. Its rewards are bestowed on such as, cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye to cast it away, deem it profitable that one of their members should perish, than that their whole body should be cast into hell fire. Nor was Gideon's easy work. His limbs were weary running ; his hand was weary slaying ; and the way was long and the sun high and hot, when he arrived with his three hundred followers, panting and exhausted, at Jordan's shore. To sit down? No. It had been sweet to lie on its green banks, and, lulled to sleep by the song of birds and murmur of the stream, rest under its cool shades awhile ; but, bent on their purpose, they dashed right into the waters, and, stemming the flood, passed over, " he and the three hundred men, faint yet pursuing." " Faint, yet pursuing," be that our chosen motto. Till we are dead to sin, and sin is dead to us, be it our daily work to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts ; and while asking that the God of hope would give us all joy and peace in believing, be the prayer we daily offer for ourselves that of St. Paul for his Thessalonian converts, " **THE VERY GOD OF PEACE SANCTIFY YOU WHOLLY.**"

Hannah the Matron.

ON entering a Roman Catholic church in many of the large cities of France or Italy, there is much to impress the mind of a spectator not accustomed to such imposing scenes. There is the vastness and magnificence of the edifice, with its "dim religious light;" the gorgeous dresses of the priests, and highly dramatic character of the services; the clouds of fragrant incense; altars illuminated with candles, and blazing with gold and jewels; the apparent devoutness of the worshippers, all on their knees with heads bent reverently to the ground, or eyes intently fixed on one who, with many a strange, mysterious sign, is changing—as they believe—bread into the flesh, and the blood of the grape into the blood of an incarnate God; and there is the grandeur of the music that swells and rolls till it seems to shake the walls of the mighty fabric, amid whose lofty arches it is heard dying away, like the echo of angels' songs. But when he has recovered from his first surprise, and begins to look around him with calm composure, there is nothing there which strikes an intelligent and thoughtful Protestant more than the remarkable disproportion between the men and women among the worshippers. For one man telling his beads in front of a shrine, or kneeling before an image, or

muttering his confession in the ear of a priest, or adoring the host, or thrusting out his tongue to receive the wafer, or engaged in any other ceremonial, there are at least twenty women. It is not that the proportion of women is twenty, or ten times larger in these countries than in our own; nor that the men there have not sins to be pardoned and souls to be saved, and know it too. It is not that the men are all atheists, and say, "There is no God;" nor even all confirmed sceptics, who, corrupted by Voltaire and others, have made up their minds to reject Christianity, and regard the Bible as "a cunningly devised fable." The striking preponderance of the one sex over the other in these Popish, as compared with our Protestant, churches is to be sought in other causes. It is mainly due to the pretensions of a church which, arrogantly claiming not only to be the mistress of the empires of the world, but of its mind, has everywhere proved itself the tool of tyrants, and an enemy to the liberties of mankind—to the monstrous frauds she practises on the credulity of her devotees—to the childish mummeries of her worship—to the pride and ambition, to the avarice, the rapacity, the sensuality, and the vices which once characterized, and, where opportunity permits, in many instances still characterize, her clergy. How gross their lives and habits were is a matter of history; nor did Luther, or Knox, or any of the Reformers ever draw a darker picture of them than some found, not in the pages merely of Roman Catholic historians, but in the records of their own Ecclesiastical Councils. For example, the sixty-eight canons enacted at a General Provincial Council which met at Edinburgh,

in the church of the Blackfriars, on the 27th Nov., 1549—eleven years before the era of the Reformation in Scotland—and which, under the presidency of Archbishop Hamilton, of St. Andrews, was attended by many prelates and distinguished members of the Church, are prefaced by a confession that the troubles and heresies which afflicted the Church were due to the corruption, the profane lewdness, and the gross ignorance of churchmen of almost all ranks. The clergy, therefore, were enjoined to put away their concubines under pain of deprivation of their benefices ; to dismiss from their houses the children born to them in concubinage ; not to promote such children to benefices, nor to enrich them, the daughters, with dowries, the sons with baronies, from the patrimony of the Church. Prelates were admonished not to keep in their households manifest drunkards, gamblers, whore-mongers, brawlers, night-walkers, buffoons, blasphemers, profane swearers ; and the clergy in general were exhorted to amend their lives and manners. Such were the fruits of Popery where it had room and freedom to develop itself ; and in these days, when short-sighted statesmen are proposing to re-establish and endow it, it is well to remember how the crimes of its clergy and the nature of its claims have made religion in many countries an object of indifference or of contempt to educated men ; to almost all who make any pretensions to intelligence, or to freedom and independence of thought.

What has happened in these lands on a great scale has happened in our own on a small one. With us infidels have taken occasion from the

crimes into which its ministers and followers have fallen to disparage religion, and sneer at piety. They have not scrupled to ransack the pages of the Bible to find matter for casting doubts on its Divine authority ; seeking in the sins of Noah, of Abraham, of Jacob, of David, and other saintly but fallible men, weapons wherewith to stab Christianity, and make hers the unhappy fate of the eagle which fell pierced by an arrow feathered from her own wing. This is unfair. For what good cause, as well as religion, has not been betrayed by some, and dishonored by others ? To raise an argument or a sneer against our holy faith on the crimes either of its professors or of its ministers, were not so, if, like Hindooism or other forms of paganism, it either lent these crimes its sanction, or had any tendency to produce them. But its tendency is the very opposite. The Bible, instead of sanctioning, strongly condemns the very sins it records—condemns them in all, but especially in the professors of religion. It is therefore impossible to conceive anything more unfair and illogical than to make the crimes of Christians a reason for doubting, or denying the truth of their faith. But the carnal mind being enmity against God, however unreasonable, it is not unnatural for men thus to abuse the apothegm, “The tree is known by its fruit.” And how careful, therefore, should the ministers of religion, and indeed all God’s people, be of their walk and conversation, of their life and manners ! how should they take heed lest their sins, even their failings and inconsistencies, afford occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, or cast a stumbling-block in the way of Christ’s weakest followers ! “Whosoever,” He has

said, "shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

These reflections are suggested by the low condition to which the crimes of the priesthood had brought religion in Israel at the time when Hannah first appears upon the stage. The mother of a distinguished man who was to introduce better days, her own lot had fallen on evil ones—in that darkest hour which precedes the dawn. The aged Eli, whose pitiful and tragic fate is one of the most touching incidents in the Bible, was then both the high-priest and judge, or civil ruler, of Israel. Presenting in his family one of the most melancholy examples of the truth that, though talents often are, grace is not hereditary, this good man had, in Hophni and Phinehas, two remarkably depraved sons. They were his colleagues and assistants in the priestly office. Taking advantage of their position to gratify passions which a too-indulgent father had allowed to grow up unchecked, they were guilty of the most atrocious crimes. They tyrannized over the people, trampling them under foot. Ministers of religion, none violated its precepts so flagrantly as they. No crime was too great for them to commit, nor place too sacred for them to profane. Neither man's property nor woman's virtue was safe in their hands. The scribes and Pharisees, those hypocrites on whose heads John Baptist and our Lord launched their loudest thunders, were not so guilty as they. Christ charged them with turning his Father's house into "a den of thieves;" but Eli's sons turned it to a fouler purpose. Regardless even of appearances,

they took no trouble to whiten the sepulchre, but committed within the sacred precincts of the temple such outrages on morality as are without a parallel, unless in the darkest days of Popery—that age of immoral popes, and priests, and monks, and nuns, which preceded and did much to produce the Reformation. The time was one for judgment to begin at the house of God, for an Ezekiel to rise up and cry aloud, saying, “Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds, Woe be to the shepherds of Israel, that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool: ye kill them that are fed, but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was drawn away, neither have ye sought that which was lost: but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled over them; and they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field where they were scattered; and none did search or seek after them. Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hands.”

Such were they who served the altar in Hannah's time; and the result was the same as the world has seen in after times. Outraged and disgraced by the crimes of its ministers, religion sank into public contempt, and, almost mortally “wounded in the house of its friends,” seemed ready to expire. With the interests of virtue betrayed by their appointed guardians; with those who should have set the best, setting the worst example; with consecrated

priests taking advantage of their position to grow rich by sacrilege, and debauch the wives and daughters of the community ; what else was to be expected than such results as may be seen in Italy, in France, and in other popish countries? At first indignant, and in the end demoralized, the people deserted the house of God, and abandoned the profession of a religion which the crimes of its priests had made to stink in their nostrils : " Wherefore," alluding to Hophni and Phinehas, it is said, " Wherefore the sin of the young men was great before the Lord, for men *abhorred* the offering of the Lord."

But even in those days God did not leave himself without a witness. There were some who felt that his, like other good causes, has never more need of support than when it is betrayed, or disgraced by its supporters. To the cry, " Another man to bear the colors !" it is a brave thing to step forward, and, plucking them from a dead hand, to raise them up and bear them on ; but it is a still nobler and braver thing to join the broken band who, refusing to flee, rally around the standard that traitors or cowards have abandoned. Such an act closed the life of Colonel Gardiner, the grand old Christian soldier, who, deserted by his own regiment on the fatal field of Prestonpans, and seeing a handful of men without an officer bravely maintaining the fight, spurred his horse through a shower of bullets to place himself at their head, and fall a sacrifice to truth and loyalty. Such an act also was the women's who openly followed our Lord with tears when no disciple had the courage to show his face in the streets—when they by their desertion had

covered Christ's cause with shame, and his enemies, in cruel mockery, had crowned his head with thorns.

We cannot perhaps apply to the father of Samuel and husband of Hannah the saying, "Faithful among the faithless only he;" yet to Elkanah certainly belongs the honor of resisting the current of popular opinion, and, in an age of all but universal defection, clinging to the cause and the house of God. When its ministers had brought dishonor on the service of God, and their crimes had made the people abhor it, he felt that there was the more need for him to stand by it. He was not the man to desert the ship. Resolved, to use the words of a brave seaman, to stick by her so long as two planks held together, and perish rather than survive her loss, he clung bravely to the wreck. Praying, expecting, waiting for better times, this devout and devoted man maintained the practice of religion; and, with few to keep him in countenance, repaired year by year, according to the statutes of the Lord, to His house in Shiloh. In this, acting a part as consonant to sound reason as to the precepts of religion, he sets an example which no Christian can fail to admire—such as no one who falls on evil times or happens to be thrown into evil company, should fail to imitate.

Standing on the shore of an estuary, one sees a boat riding in the tideway, when sea-weed and other things float by, over the self-same spot; and whether the tide ebbs or flows, whether it steals quietly in or comes on with the rush and roar of foaming billows, the boat always boldly shows its face to it; and turning its head to the current re-

ceives on its bows, to split them, the shock of waves. This, which to a child would seem strange, is due to the anchor that lies below the waters, and, grasping the solid ground with its iron arms, holds fast the boat. It seems no less wonderful to see a tree—no sturdy oak, but slender birch, or trembling aspen—standing erect away up on a mountain brow; where, exposed to the sweep of every storm, it has gallantly maintained its ground against the tempests that have laid in the dust the stateliest ornaments of the plain. But our wonder ceases so soon as we climb the height, and see wherein its great strength lies; how it has struck its roots down into the mountain, and wrapped them with many a strong twist and turn round and round the rock. Such an anchor, and rock, and stay, Elkanah had in God. To divine grace, his steadfastness to duty against the popular influence and amid almost universal defection was mainly due. Yet I cannot doubt, nor, knowing what in trying times husbands have owed to brave and pious wives, would I doubt though I could, that in the bold and faithful part he acted, Elkanah owed much to her whose name gives a title to our chapter.

Both before and since the days when they ministered to our Lord, and, following him to Calvary with their tears, were the last at the cross and the first at the sepulchre, the Church has exhibited many instances of high and holy heroism on the part of women. However deserving of the name in ordinary circumstances, where martyrs' fires were fiercely burning, and scaffolds flowed with blood, and prisons overflowed with captives, women have not showed themselves to be the "weaker sex."

On the contrary, when adherence to principle involved painful sacrifice, men have found such support in gentle women as I have seen the green and pliant ivy lend the wall it clothed and clung to, when that, undermined or shaken, was ready to fall. Daughters of Eve, but no tools of the tempter to seduce, with a babe at their breast and others at their knee, they have encouraged men to withstand temptation, and boldly face the storm, counting rank, home, living, and all things else, but loss for Christ. Such was the spirit of Hannah.

Some good men have been sorely tried by godless wives. Of Solomon; who presents a signal illustration of the saying of an old Scotch judge, "That you can never determine a man's sanity either by the wife he marries or by the religion he adopts," it is said "his wives turned away his heart after other gods." Happier than Solomon and many else, Elkanah was not one of whom it could be said, "A man's enemies shall be those of his own house." At least, so far as concerned Hannah, his was not a house divided against itself. Entering with sympathy into all his plans and works of piety, inflaming his zeal, and confirming him in his resolution, though he should stand alone, to stand by the cause of God, she was worthy the name of "helpmeet." Blessed woman, and "mother in Israel," we would set her forth as a model for wives, and mothers, and all, to imitate.

HER PATIENCE.

"There is a skeleton in every house!" This, though a trite, is a true saying, and trite because it

is true. The grim monitor that stands in every house to teach us that unmingled pleasures are to be sought in heaven, Hannah found in hers. Happier than some that have been unequal'y yoked with unbelievers, she had a worthy and pious husband. Never was wife more prized and more loved than she. In what esteem Elkanah held her, how fondly he cherished her, how dear she was to him, and how kind he was to her, appears in the very strong and tender terms with which he essays to soothe her grief, saying, "Why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? Am not I better to thee than ten sons?"

As is indicated by that question, her great trial was to be childless—a disappointment which, though it seems natural for all wives to wish to be mothers, either from every Jewish woman hoping to be the mother of the Messiah, or for some other reason, was more painfully felt by them than it would appear to be by other women. But her trial, like a wound into which cruel hands rub salt, or some other smarting thing, turning ordinary pain into intolerable torture, was greatly aggravated and embittered by the happier fortune and insolent reproaches of a rival.

We may be astonished to hear that Hannah had a rival; and that a man whom we have seen standing up so bravely for the cause of God, and setting his breast like a rock against the tide of irreligion that swept over the land, should have conformed to one of the worst customs of the world. Yet such is man! There are spots in the very sun—such defects in the brightest Christians as to remind us of the words, "I have seen an end of all perfection."

Elkanah was a polygamist. To his own misfortune, not less than to Hannah's, he had another wife besides her. A violation of that law of nature which introduces about an equal number of both sexes into the world, and a breach also of that revealed will whereby we are taught that at the first it was not so—one woman only being given to the man—this practice, though winked at, was punished in Elkanah's case—as it was punished in Jacob's, in David's, in Solomon's, and is still punished wherever polygamy prevails. Homes that might be the abodes of peace are disturbed through polygamy by intestine broils; ever and anon swept by storms of domestic discord. There envy reigns, furious jealousies, and hatred. There rage the worst passions that a sense of injury and a false position can rouse in woman's breast.

In some kind and gentle women Hannah's misfortune would have excited feelings of sympathy. But the other wife, who had children—a rude, coarse, proud, and vulgar woman—turned it into an occasion for triumphing over her, and embittering all the springs of her life. Elkanah loved Hannah more than her. Peninnah saw that; and to be avenged of a wrong that rankled in her bosom, and she could neither forgive nor forget, she poured forth the vials of her wrath on the head of her innocent but unhappy rival. “Her adversary,” it is said, “also provoked her sore for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb.”

In these circumstances—circumstances to which the adage, so generally true, applies with peculiar force, “*Speech is silvern, but silence is golden*”—

Hannah teaches us how to bear our trials, whatever their nature be ; and how to seek, and where to find relief. Weep she must—if haply her heart overcharged with sorrow, like a dark cloud that dissolves itself in showers, may find relief in tears. These flow from her eyes, but no word of reproach passes her lips. Reviled, she reviled not again. She feels as it is in nature, but acts as it is only in grace to do. The woman is not lost in the saint, nor, as is apt to happen, is the saint lost in the woman. Where others, roused to fury, would have retaliated, Hannah silently submits ; where others would have given themselves up to repinings and hopeless grief, Hannah prays. Her patience could not conquer Peninnah ; but her prayers might achieve a greater conquest. By them she might prevail with God. In her trouble she sought the Lord—by and by to turn the tables on her adversary ; by and by, in that temple where Peninnah's reproaches had wrung her heart with grief and filled her eyes with tears, to stand with a boy at her side—an offering to the Lord of her grateful heart, and lift up her voice over her enemy, as God's people at last shall over all theirs, singing this magnificent ode :

“My heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord, my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies ; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the Lord : for there is none beside thee : neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly ; let not arrogance come out of your mouth ; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they

that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread ; and they that were hungry ceased ; so that the barren hath born seven ; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive : he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich : he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory : for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness ; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces ; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them : the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth ; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

HER MEEKNESS.

A singular phenomenon has sometimes been noticed at sea. In a gale, when the storm, increasing in violence, has at length risen into a hurricane, the force of the wind has been observed to actually beat down the waves, producing a temporary and comparative calm ; and similar is the effect occasionally produced by awful and overwhelming trials—these, by their very power and pressure on the heart, abating both the violence, and the expression of its feelings. But what is equally remarkable and still more observable in trials is, that we can more

easily bear a heavy blow from God's hand than a light one from man's. Conscious of sin, we feel that He has a right to afflict, where man has none. Job, for example, sat on the ruins of his fortune and the grave of all his children to kiss the rod that had smitten him, and say, as he put his hand on the mouth of a mother who was raging like a bear bereaved of her whelps, "Shall we receive good at the hands of the Lord, and not receive evil also? The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord!" Yet when his friends—his "miserable comforters," as he called them—but rudely touched the wounds God's hand had made, he winced. Their injurious speeches broke him down; and losing the magnanimous patience with which he had seen his family and fortune buried in one day, in a common grave, he now exclaims, "Oh that God would grant my request: that God would grant me the thing I long for; that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand and cut me off. My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than my life. Wherefore hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost and no eye had seen me!" It has been also observed that it is much more difficult to meekly bear wrongs inflicted by friends—by such as we revere, respect, or love—than by the hands of enemies. Hence the emphasis of those complaints which in respect of the wrongs our Lord suffered, and suffers still, from the sins of His people, not only from such treachery as Iscariot's, but such denials as Peter's and such desertion as the other disciples', we may ascribe to him, "Mine own familiar friend hath lifted up the

heel against me ;” “ These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends !” Now under such a wrong how admirable the meekness, how sanctified the temper, of Hannah !

Smarting under the cruel reproaches of her rival, overwhelmed with grief, to use the very words of Scripture, “ in bitterness of soul,” she lingers in the temple behind the rest, and there alone, as she supposed, pours out her tears and prayers before the Lord. Resting after the work of the day— heavy on an aged man—but unseen by her, Eli sits by a post of the temple. Her sobs and sighs, perhaps, calling his attention, he turns—to see a woman there. Tears stream down her cheeks. Hers is a sorrow with which no stranger could intermeddle, and God, who hears in secret, alone could cure. So while calling on Him, and vowing that if He will give her a man-child, he shall be the Lord’s all the days of his life, Hannah prays in silence. But though no sound was heard, her lips moved ; while probably her body, sympathizing with the agitation of her spirit, as it often does under violent grief, kept rocking all the while. His eyes dim as well as his head gray with years, Eli—too much accustomed in these evil times to see abandoned women—thought she was drunk ; and more ready, like other weak, indulgent fathers, to discover and reprove sin in others than in his own sons, he addresses her sharply, saying, “ How long wilt thou be drunken ? put away thy wine from thee.” A grave and very offensive accusation ! Under such a charge, and in the rapid alternation with which the mind passes from one passion to another, who would have been asto-

nished had her grief suddenly changed to anger? We dare not have blamed this highly virtuous as well as broken-hearted woman, had she repelled with indignation so foul a charge. It was hard enough to suffer Peninnah's scoffs; but it is harder to have insult added to injury, and her bleeding wounds, as now, torn wider by the hands that should have closed them. The meekness of Moses has become a proverb; and justly so. But did he, did any man or woman, ever show a milder, gentler, lovelier spirit, a more magnanimous example of how to suffer wrong, than Hannah when, without one angry look or tone, she replied, "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto." No wonder that Eli, perceiving the wrong he had done, should have turned his reproaches on himself; and touched with Hannah's grief, answered and said, "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him."

HER FAITH.

I know an island that stands crowned by its ancient fortalice in the middle of a lake, some good bow-shots from the shore. With the walls of the old ruin mantled in ivy, and its tower rising grim and gray above the foliage of hoary elms, it serves no purpose now but to recall old times and ornament a lovely landscape. But once that island

and its stronghold were the refuge and life of those whose ordinary residence was the castle that, with gates, and bulwarks, and many a tower, and floating banner rose in baronial pride on the shore. When in the troublous times of old that was beleagured, and its defenders could hold it out no longer against the force and fury of the siege, they sought their boats, and, escaping by the postern gate over waters too deep to wade and too broad to swim, threw themselves on the island—within the walls of the stout old keep to enjoy peace in the midst of war, and safe beyond the shot of cross-bow, to laugh their enemies to scorn. In their hardest plight, and against the greatest numbers, this refuge never failed them.

Such a refuge and relief his people find in God. Hence the confidence and bold language of the Psalmist, "Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence: I shall not be greatly moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times: ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us." Hence, also, in allusion to the security such strongholds offered in the East, as well as here, in olden times, the Bible says, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, into which the righteous runneth, and is safe." And thus, as prayer is our way of access to God, and the means by which we place ourselves under his protection, it is a resource that never fails. There is no evil from which it does not offer escape; no sin of which it may not, through the application of

Christ's blood, procure the pardon ; nor any temptation over which, calling in the aids of the Holy Spirit, it may not achieve a victory. There is no burden too heavy for the back of prayer to carry, nor wound too deep for its balm to heal. It provides comfort in all the sorrows, relief amid all the troubles, and a cure for all the ills of life. When her rival vexed, and her husband tried in vain to comfort her, teaching us what to do and where to go, Hannah sought her comfort in prayer. That door remained open when all others were shut ; that spring filled the fountain to its lip when all other streams were dry. She found in God the comfort that she sought. She longed to have a man-child ; and had such faith in God as to believe that, though it might seem a miracle, He was able to grant her request, and, in the words of the psalm, "make the barren woman to keep house, and be a joyful mother of children." And He who helped Hannah to conceive such faith, helped her to conceive a son. Let her case teach us that the way to get anything is first to get faith—"all things are possible to him that believeth."

There are people, who claim to be philosophers, that laugh such hopes to scorn. Amid evidences of a divine wisdom, power, and goodness, visible and bright as the sun at noonday, they cannot say, what "the fool saith in his heart, There is no God ;" but their God is not our God, nor is "their rock like unto our Rock." According to them God leaves all events to the operation of what they call "the ordinary laws of nature," without guiding, controlling, overruling, or interfering with them in any way whatever. No wonder that with such

views the Divine Being is to them neither an object of reverential worship nor of filial affection. How should they fear, or love God? Their God is a Sovereign, who, parting with his sceptre though he retains his crown, is denuded of all authority—a Father who, careless of their fate, casts his children out on the world, like the poor babe a guilty mother exposes, which, though it may perchance be pitied and protected by others, is cruelly forsaken by the author of its being. How dark and dreary such a philosophy! All nature, and every religion, Pagan as well as Christian, revolts against it. And I cannot but regard them as the greatest enemies of mankind who, denying the efficacy, would silence the voice of prayer; and sweep away the last refuge of wretchedness; and quench the one hope that shines to many over life's troubled waters; and plunge our world into the darkness of a perpetual eclipse—into the sorrows and miseries of a home where wife and children stand helpless around the bed on which their guide, and guardian, and protector, and bread-winner, lies deaf, and mute, and cold, in death.

Some one has said of prayer, It moves the hand that moves the world. A grand truth! to a poor conscious-stricken sinner, to an alarmed soul, to an anxious, weary, trembling spirit, a truth more precious than all science and philosophy. Hannah believed it. Nor—encouraging us to cast ourselves in faith on the promises of God in Jesus Christ, on the ample bosom of his love, and into the almighty arms of his providence—did Hannah believe in vain. She left the temple, and went home, a changed and happy woman. "She went her way."

it is said, "and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad;" and came back betimes to say to Eli, as leading Samuel by the hand she presented him to the aged priest, "O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord: for this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord: as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

Samuel the Butler.

IN the county of Forfar is a city which, though more than once carried by storm, sacked and burned by the armies of England, possesses some interesting ecclesiastical ruins. Close by its old cathedral stands the finest specimen extant of those round towers, whose origin is lost amid the mists of an extreme antiquity. England has none. They were once rather numerous in Ireland: and Scotland retains still the only two she ever had—one at Brechin, the other, a much less imposing structure, at Abernethy, on the banks of the Tay. Like the fires that blaze from many a height and hill on the night of St. John's day, like the practice, not everywhere yet fallen into desuetude, of visiting certain wells and washing with dew on the first morning of May, these towers are believed by many to be vestiges of old Pagan worship. They bear a remarkable resemblance to some structures found in India: and like the customs I have referred to, are supposed by some to have been connected with the adoration of the sun—that form of idolatry which appeared at an early period among the descendants of Noah, and was carried along with them, as they advanced in successive waves, over the face of the unpeopled earth.

Near by that tower in Brechin, and forming the

last battle-field in our island against the aggressions of Papal Rome, stood a principal station of the Culdees—those first and early missionaries who, coming originally from Ireland, and having their chief seat in Iona, converted the Scotch to the Christian faith, and the inhabitants also of the northern parts of England. Their college, of which the name, attached to some gardens, still survives, stood under the shadow of that beautiful tower; and it was probably from their hands that it received—in a figure of our Lord on the cross, which stands above the doorway, flanked on either side by the mouldering form of a pilgrim—the Christian emblems it bears. It was a questionable policy, still it was a common practice with many of the early Christian missionaries, for the purpose of winning over the people from heathenism and of recommending the new faith, to link it on to the old. For example, they appointed Christian festivals to be celebrated at the time set apart by use and wont for heathen ones. Hence the festival of St. John's day was held at the time the heathens had been accustomed to celebrate the rites of Baal, and kindle fires in honor of their god. Hence, also, the name of Easter, which is said to be borrowed from the worship of Astarte, or Ash-taroth, or the Queen of Heaven, or the moon; and hence the crosses that were cut by the early missionaries, and may still be seen in Brittany, on its numerous *menhirs*—those vast monoliths of granite which are supposed to have belonged to the old Druidical worship, and were everywhere regarded by the people with feelings of sacred veneration. Abutting against this old round tower,

and casting its shadow over the site of the college of the Culdees, stands the cathedral, with its gray steeples and roofless chancel, a monument of Popish times. It is now the parish church, having been turned into a place of Protestant worship ; though, like cathedrals everywhere, with its long lines of massive Gothic pillars, as little fitted as it was intended for the preaching of the Gospel. Thus, and there, within a space more limited than is perhaps to be found anywhere else,—as a geological map shows the various strata that constitute the crust of the earth,—this old city of Forfarshire shows us in Pagan, in Culdee, in Popish, and in Protestant objects, monuments of the successive religious faiths and forms of the country.

Removed by some distance from these, and almost concealed from view in an obscure *wynd*, or alley, of the same town, stand the ruins of an old chapel. As an acknowledgment of God's overruling providence and an expression of man's devout gratitude, it has a sacred and instructive history. On this account, though the shafts of its windows are shattered and broken, and the teeth of time have left little else on its mouldering walls than the faint traces of angel and saintly figures, and though since I remember, profaned, as some would say, to the base purposes of byres and stables, these ruins form one of the most interesting of the relics that cluster about that old town. Standing for six hundred years, they have had a long life ; yet their history may be briefly told.

In those rude times which long preceded the birth of science in our country, when there was no appliance of steam to wear vessels off the dangers of a

lee-shore, nor lights shone forth on sunken reef or rocky headland to guide them through the gloom of night, one of the royal family of Scotland was in imminent hazard of shipwreck. After every effort had been made, but made in vain, to wear off shore, he vowed a vow that if God would interpose to deliver them from death, he would build and endow a chapel, as an acknowledgment of God's gracious interposition and an expression of his own gratitude. They were saved. In the words of the Psalm, "They looked unto Him and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed: this poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." And, though a Papist, a better man than many Protestants who forget, in the day of returned health or prosperity, the vows and resolutions formed in an hour of trouble, he fulfilled his promise. In the erection of *Maison Dieu* Chapel, for so it is called, David, Earl of Huntingdon, paid his vow. Associated though it be with popish superstitions, it sprung from higher motives than either ecclesiastical pride or sectarian rivalry; and humble as these ruins are now, they form a venerable and interesting memorial of the simple faith, and devout piety, that ever and anon, like the blaze of a brilliant meteor, lighted up the long night of the dark ages of the Church.

Such dedications and vows, as those to which that chapel owed its existence, have fallen into too great disuse. They may indeed be made to assume the profane appearance of driving a bargain with God—such a bargain as man makes with his fellows on change, or in the market. They are not to be made as if we could purchase the divine favor; or,

as if God were to be propitiated by any offerings of ours ; or, as if demanding, if I may say so, a *quid pro quo*, He gave nothing but “ for a consideration.”

Such ideas are involved in many popish vows. They run counter to the blessed truth that He who spared not his own Son will with him also freely give us all things. Dishonoring the character of God, popery makes merchandise of his mercy ; and practically denying salvation by his free grace and the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, sells pardons for money, and makes profit out of sins. But her abuses ought not to have been allowed to bring into disrepute a class of vows for which we have the highest authority—a service it were graceful in Christians to render, and, in Hannahs dedicating their children, and people their substance, to God, it were well for the interests of his Church to revive. Such vows were made in its earliest ages, and by its most distinguished saints ; and, as in the case of him who said on the eve of battle, “ If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be that whatever cometh out of the doors of my house to meet me shall surely be the Lord’s,” they were faithfully performed—even where they involved the greatest sacrifices. Take these examples. On that sacred spot where Jacob, fleeing from a brother’s wrath, saw the ladder that, alive with angels, some ascending and some descending, rose from earth and reached to heaven, he vowed such a vow, saying, “ If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God ; and

this stone which I have set up for a pillar shall be God's house ; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." David also teaches us by his example to join promises to prayer, and undertake, if our requests are granted, to express our gratitude by gifts as well as by words. He says, alluding to some time of sore and heavy trials, "Thou, O God, hast proved us ; thou hast tried us as silver is tried ; thou broughtest us into the net ; thou laidst affliction on our loins ; thou hast caused men to ride over our heads ; we went through fire and water, but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place. I will go into thy house with burnt offerings ; I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble."

The devout, but too much neglected, practice which these famous saints observed, Hannah also recommends to our imitation. It was in the performance of such a vow that she returned to the house of God, not empty-handed ; but to earn, if I may say so, the high encomium pronounced on her of whom our Lord said, "She hath given all she had." In that child of prayer, her only son, the boy whom she leads lovingly by the hand, Hannah presented to God a gift more beautiful and costly, more precious far, than Jacob's tithe of corn and cattle, or David's richest spoils of war. It wrings her heart to part with him. Without her boy, his prattling tongue, and pattering feet, and playful sports, and fond caresses, how dull and dreary her home will seem ! But she got him from God, and to God she is here to give him—as taking Samuel by the hand she goes up to Eli, saying, "Oh my lord, as thy soul

liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord ; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

A blessed contrast to another woman, the unhappy partner of Ananias' guilt and also of his doom, who, pretending, while a part was withheld, that the whole price had been given, lied to the Holy Ghost, Hannah, in going to perform her vow, like a martyr marching to the stake, "walks in her integrity." Her case was different from ours. We enter into the engagements of a communion-table publicly, and before the Church—calling God and man to witness that we give ourselves to Christ, and will die with, rather than deny, Him. It is well to do so. The publicity of our vows helps to the performance of them. For, though the dominant power in the heart of every Christian will be the love of Christ—that love which constraineth us to judge that if one died for all then were all dead, and that He died that they who live should not live to themselves, but to Him who died for them—we are none the worse, but the better of auxiliary motives. With the tide running strong against him, setting earthward, he who would go to heaven will find he needs to crowd all sail upon the mast. There are circumstances in which, unless we would abandon the path of duty, we must take up a position against the world, and say with Paul, "It is a small thing for me to be judged of man's judgment ; He that judgeth me is God ;" yet it will often help to keep us on our guard, and out of the ways of sin, to feel

that the eye of others is upon us ; that we have bound ourselves publicly, before the church and world, to pay our vows and live consistently with our Christian profession. But Hannah's case was peculiar. She might, repenting of her vow, have hept back not a part of the price, but the whole ; nor thereby laid herself open to challenge or censure ; to the taunts of Peninnah, her enemy, or of any one else. When she vowed that if God would give her a son, he should be the Lord's, Eli saw her lips move ; but no more—and hearing nothing took her for a drunken woman. Only God and she herself knew what these lips had said. That was enough for Hannah. It should be so for us. "Thou God seest me," should place us in circumstances of greater restraint than broad daylight, the public street, the eyes of a theatre of spectators ; even so it was a sufficient reason for Hannah performing her vow that God had heard the words of her noiseless lips, and that the vow, though a secret to others, was none to Him. Though in accents inaudible to mortal ears, she had opened her mouth to the Lord ; and when her heart gave way as she looked on her boy, and kissed him, and thought how much she should miss him, and how dull and dreary home would be without him, her answer to Nature—to all the mother yearning within her—was Jephthah's, as, bending over his daughter, his only beloved child, he exclaimed, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back !"

A woman and a mother, one in whose heart Samuel filled up the great blank, by his birth rolling away her reproach and brightening the whole world

to her, Hannah paid her vow with a resolution equal to Jephthah's. In this, in dedicating Samuel to the Lord, and parting with him, how does she put us to shame!—presenting an example of gratitude to God, and a pious regard for his honor and service, which few do, and yet all should try to emulate. To any mother, but especially to one of her keen and lively sensibilities, the parting with her son at his tender age must have been felt an awful wrench—the next thing to death, nor that a common death, but the bereavement whose grief He who knows a parent's feelings selects as that which our sorrow for sin should resemble, saying, “They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn as one mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness as one is in bitterness for a first-born.” Samuel was Hannah's only son, and, at that time, her only child.

It is to the honor of Hannah's sex that the only two offerings on which Jesus, **He who offered himself** for her and us on the cross, ever bestowed the need of his applause, were both made by women. The one was a widow. Poor, and meanly clad, in her offering as much as in her dress, she presented a remarkable contrast to many who, sweeping into the house of God, attired in all the gayeties of changing fashions, give a wide berth to the plate at the door, or drop into the offertory, without a blush of shame, the merest, meanest pittance. Though but two mites, hers was a munificent gift, being her little all. “Verily,” said our Lord to his disciples, as he pointed her out to their notice and admiration—“Verily, I say unto you, this poor widow hath cast more in than all they have cast into the

treasury; for all they"—meaning those among whose shining heap of gold and silver her mites seemed mean, and unworthy of a place—"all they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want did cast in all she had, even all her living." The other woman, praised by Him whom all heaven praises, was one—strange as it will appear to such as have not reflected on the blessed truth, that a *fallen* is not necessarily a *lost* woman—from whose touch decency and decorum shrinks. As the phrase went, "she was a sinner." Lying, where all have need, and the purest love, to lie, at Jesus' feet, she washes them with a flood of tears; and, shaking out her golden locks, she wipes them with the hairs of her head: with mingled reverence and affection, kisses them; and, taking an alabaster box of precious ointment, pours its fragrance on the feet that for her, and us, were to be nailed on Calvary. "Simon," said our Lord to the Pharisee who would have driven the penitent from his door, and indeed doubted whether our Lord could be a prophet because he had allowed her to touch him—"Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house—thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment."—"Why was this waste of the ointment made?"—"Let her alone. Verily, I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also

that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Beside these women Hannah deserves a place. In her dedication of Samuel, in giving him up who was the light of her eyes and the joy of her home, she parted for God's sake and his service with the costliest, the most prized and precious, thing in her possession. Her only son, and indeed her only child, in giving him—with a munificence not second, but in some aspects superior, to the widow's—she gave all she had. It was a great sacrifice. Yet to emulate and even surpass it, were that possible, nothing more is necessary than that we form an adequate estimate of what we owe for, and owe to, Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit help us to do so! Did we estimate and feel that aright, in what willing services, by what costly gifts, through what munificent offerings, in what noble sacrifices, should we embody the rapt and grateful exclamation of the Apostle. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Before turning the dedication of Samuel to a practical, and—especially in these days, when there is so much need of more ministers and a better provision for them—to a very important practical use, let me observe, that though we may have to wait for the reward and recompense in heaven, Hannah had not so long to wait. She says of Samuel, "I have *lent* him to the Lord;" and God paid her good interest for the loan. Being her chief earthly enjoyment, was he, so to speak, her life? Ages before the great words were uttered by the lips of Jesus, she proved the truth of His saying, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will

lose his life for my sake shall find it." She got back all, and more than all, she had lost—she had given away. "There is that scattereth," says the wise man, "and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat." Such was Hannah's experience. She gave away one child, and God paid her back with five; and promptly too. When taking farewell of her boy, she had wept over him, and kissed him, and torn herself away from his embraces and entwining arms, and gone to her lonely home, it is said, "The Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters." And, at some time, in some form or other, the offerings we present to God, the bread our faith casts upon the waters, will return. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not this word: "THERE IS NO MAN THAT HATH LEFT HOUSE, OR BRETHREN, OR SISTERS, OR FATHER, OR MOTHER, OR WIFE, OR CHILDREN, OR LANDS, FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL'S, BUT SHALL RECEIVE AN HUNDRED-FOLD NOW IN THIS TIME, AND IN THE WORLD TO COME ETERNAL LIFE."

HIS DEDICATION.

To turn the dedication of Samuel to a seasonable and important use, let me ask why so few parents now follow Hannah's example? why so few either dedicate themselves, or are dedicated by others to the Christian ministry? When other professions are overstocked, why is it that almost all the churches, both in this country and in Ame-

rica, are complaining of a lack of candidates for the sacred office, and especially of such as possess not only the piety, but the talents and culture which it requires ?

Without looking to the claims of the heathen world, which, with 600,000,000 of human beings left to perish for lack of missionaries, is crying, "Come over and help us," or to the state of Europe—to so great an extent either bound in the chains of Popery, or drifting, like a vessel broken loose from its anchors, away from all religious faith, our own country requires a much larger staff of ministers. Not otherwise are its overgrown cities to be redeemed from a state of practical heathenism ; not otherwise are the civil and religious privileges which our fathers watered with their tears and nourished with their blood, to be preserved from ruin—certain and not very distant ruin. Take London, for instance. Its condition, as ascertained by inquiries in connection with Bishop Tait's Fund, is alarming, and indeed appalling. Look at this extract from its report ; and let my readers, while studying it, bear in mind that in the estimates which the Bishop makes, the presence and labors of Dissenters are not ignored ; a large margin is left for the efforts they make to supply the spiritual necessities of the diocese : "We have now to state the result of our inquiries into the present religious condition of the diocese of London. From the returns obtained at this time, and from other sources, it appears that out of all the parishes and districts included in the diocese (amounting to about 450), about 239 are already provided up to the measure of the standards adopted. They will,

therefore, for the present be left out of consideration in estimating the wants of the diocese. The remaining 211 parishes have been classed as follows, according to the amount of their deficiency :

I. As regards deficiency of clergy,—one clergyman only.

Class.	Parishes.	Gross population.
I for 8,000 and upwards.....	11.....	228,000
II from 6,000 to 8,000.....	14.....	171,400
III " 4,000 to 6,000.....	59.....	757,300
IV. " 2,000 to 4,000.....	110.....	919,300
Not deficient in clergy, but in } church-room.....	} 17.....	74,000
Total.....	211.....	2,150,000

The total population of those 211 deficient parishes is about 2,150,000, the number of clergy is 582. But this number of clergy on the standard assumed is sufficient for the supervision of 1,164,000 only (making allowance, as we have done, for the labors of other religious bodies); there remains, therefore, a population of very nearly 1,000,000 of persons for whom a further provision of 500 clergy would be required."

The diocese of London alone, taking into account the proportion of the different Dissenting bodies, requires for a sufficient spiritual provision nearly One Thousand additional ministers of the gospel; and if so, how great must be the increase required by the whole country, with its overgrown towns, and thickly-peopled mining and manufacturing districts?

But ours are times in which quality is hardly a less important element than quantity. It is not now as in bygone days, when the pulpit was almost the only public organ, and had it all its own way. In the press and platform, in associa-

tions for science and the arts, in mechanics' and philosophical institutions, it finds formidable rivals; not seldom formidable antagonists. The public taste, elevated by the able writing of those journals which are so widely read, demands a high style of preaching; while there is abroad such a spirit of inquiry and of lawless doubt as requires ministers thoroughly equipped for their work—highly educated and accomplished men; able to meet the sceptic on the fields of science to give a reason for the faith that is in them, to protect that of others from being rudely shaken, and to defend against all comers the integrity and authority of the Word of God.

In such circumstances it is alarming to hear on every hand, and from all the churches both of Great Britain and America, complaints that the number of those offering themselves for the ministry, instead of increasing with the increase of population, and growing with the growing wants of society, is falling off; and that the candidates are not only falling off in numbers, but in many instances in fitness for the work. The number of them, for example, from the universities at Oxford and Cambridge during the ten years preceding 1864 fell off by eighty a-year. "It is certain," said the Archbishop of Canterbury in his primary charge delivered in the above-mentioned year, "it is certain from correct statistical returns, that the number of candidates ordained as deacons has diminished in the last ten years on an average of sixty-five per year." Nor are matters improved since then. For what is the conclusion at which one thoroughly conversant with the subject has arrived? "It ap-

pears," he states, "that the number of clergymen ordained is not only decreasing, but in an increasing ratio, while the proportion of university men is declining, and of *literate*s (candidates who have received only an inferior education) is increasing. The calibre of those entering the ministry of late years has been gradually deteriorating, and we are threatened with one of the greatest misfortunes that can befall a nation—a clergy who in intellect are not superior to the public they profess to teach."

The existence of this evil in all churches, endowed and unendowed, Dissenting as well as Established, is unquestionable; and we should tremble for the ark of God but that we know it to be not irremediable. The Christian people of this great and wealthy nation have the remedy in their own hands. May God make them like "the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do!"

It is worse than useless to blink the matter. The main reason why there are so few Hannahs among the parents of our Christian families, and why so few youths of promise and of powers come forward to offer themselves for service in the house of God, lies in the inadequate provision made for ministers: in the fact which, if people did not know, they ought to have known, that with exceptional cases, and these rare, ministers do not receive allowances sufficient for their comfortable maintenance. Many a man who spends his life in the service of the church has to struggle with pecuniary difficulties to its close, and leave, when he dies, his widow and children without the means of support.

This is true of all churches, Established and Dissenting. Take for example the Church of England—with a clergy often represented as wallowing in wealth. Their position is not seldom a very painful one ; and so discreditable that I wonder how her adherents, wealthy and willing as large numbers of them are, do not of their own bounty supply what is lacking in the endowments of the Church. Years ago the condition of some of them presented itself before me in a way that equally moved my sorrow and astonishment. On arriving at Mr. Nisbet's; the well-known publisher's, Berners Street, London, a private carriage was leaving his door from which I saw a large bundle given out. On passing this bundle, which lay in the lobby, Mr. Nisbet touched it with his foot, saying, " You'll not guess what that is. That," he added, " is old clothes, cast-off clothes for the families of poor but worthy ministers of the Church of England. I receive and distribute a large quantity of them every year, and they are most thankfully received." I stood amazed at this ; that men of education and accomplishments, of refinement and piety, who were devoting their strength and talents to the cause of our Redeemer, should be placed in such humiliating circumstances. It was a shame ; but the shame did not belong to them. Yet how bitter to be reduced to the necessity of receiving such charity !—for a man of delicate feelings to see his wife, a refined and well-born and high minded lady, walking to church with their children in cast-off clothes ! I could not have been more grieved, but I should have been less astonished, had I known then, as I do now, the utterly inadequate provision

made for many of the ministers of that Church. While the whole revenues of archiepiscopal and episcopal sees, of the cathedral and collegiate churches, of the several dignities and benefices of the Church of England, were they divided among all her clergy, would not yield to each more than £259 a year, what is the actual state of matters? There are more than 5,000 livings in the Church of England which do not amount to £200 a year. In Wales, in 1853, more than one-half of the benefices were below £100. In the diocese of St. David's nearly the half were below that miserable living. In the diocese of Durham, out of 260 benefices 62 were below £150. In the diocese of Carlisle, out of 249 benefices, 151 were below £150, and 95 below even £100. And at this moment, out of 5,000 curates, most of whom have the feelings, and have received the education, and are expected to make the appearance of gentlemen, many do not receive so much as the salary of a junior clerk, or the wages of a skilled artizan.

All the churches have to take shame to themselves for the scanty provision made for their ministers. But now-a-days this long-standing grievance is greatly aggravated. Of late years our country has grown enormously in wealth. For instance, the amount of income assessable for the property and income tax in Scotland, which was twenty-one millions in 1842, had risen in 1867 to thirty-nine millions, had nearly doubled itself in that time; but no corresponding increase has been made in the allowances to ministers, endowed or unendowed. The following tables show how other

classes have been benefited by the prosperity of the country. In Glasgow per week—

Masons received in	1846,	22s. 6d,	but in 1866,	32s.
Blacksmiths	"	18s.	"	26s.
Laborers	"	15s.	"	20s.
Slaters	"	18s.	"	27s.

In Glasgow, per year, certain employees of commercial houses

	Received in 1846, £100, but in 1866, £200			
Others	"	"	200	" 350
"	"	"	130	" 250
"	"	"	119	" 301
"	"	"	100	" 250

But while, as might be inferred from these statements, that are but specimens, all classes have largely benefited by the tide of prosperity with which God has blessed our country, those who serve at his altars, the ministers of the Gospel, have been left as poor, or rather, in consequence of the rise on prices, poorer than ever.

In a collection of old pamphlets I have found a very able and admirable address on this subject by the late Rev. Dr. Peddie, which reads so much as if it had been written for our own day that it would be well to republish it. He says :

“ The circumstances of the times require that ministers of the gospel should be better educated, if possible, than when information was less generally diffused, and the learned were less generally hostile to religion ; but the difficulty of obtaining persons regularly educated for the ministry has, at the same time, greatly increased. The prosperous state of our country holds out to young men, even of very moderate talents, almost as soon as they have

quitted school, invitations to competency, respectability, and affluence, in many different lines of business, while the youth who would count it his honor to serve God in the Gospel of his Son, is discouraged from making the attempt, or arrested in his progress, by difficulties which he knows not how to surmount. Even pious parents who are in circumstances to educate their children for the ministry without serious inconvenience to themselves, now for the most part dissuade them. They grudge to make large advances for which they can scarcely expect any adequate return : and when they see the companions of their son, perhaps his inferiors in years and talents, already advanced far on the road to affluence, while he continues in a state of dependence, and has no prospect, however successful in his pursuit, of ever advancing many degrees beyond poverty, they think themselves justified in their attempts to induce him to abandon so unprofitable a profession. Necessity may compel men already in the office to struggle with poverty, or they may feel it to be their duty to persevere in laboring among a people who are undutiful and unkind ; but the same obligations are not upon individuals who are yet free, to devote themselves to the ministry at the expense of sacrificing those conveniences and comforts to which their station entitles them, and which many of their people enjoy.

“ That some persons grudge the necessary expense of maintaining the Gospel, is too well known for us to affect to conceal it ; but these, we trust, are few ; and they are seldom either the best informed or the most amiable and exemplary among

you. They are persons, in general, so parsimonious, and so devoted to 'the unrighteous mammon,' as equally to murmur at whatever is expended on the poor, on their ministers, or on themselves; or, if they are liberal in answering the calls of appetite, and in complying with every demand of fashion, and narrow only when the honor of the Gospel and the comfort of its ministers are interested, they give such decided evidence of dislike to the Gospel of Christ, and of aversion to his yoke, as justifies us in accounting them 'spots in your feasts of charity.' What is it that such persons would persuade you to refuse as unreasonable and oppressive? One lust is more expensive to its unhappy slave than all the ordinances of the Gospel. The idle fashions of the world, to which even the more sober among you occasionally conform, make larger demands upon you every season than the necessities of your ministers ever did; and they are cheerfully answered. Yea, more money is sometimes extracted from your pockets to serve up one unnecessary entertainment, than would be requisite as your individual share, in order to make your pastors and their families happy. Where, then, are your feelings as men, where your obedience and gratitude as Christians, if such small sacrifices as their comfort requires are refused? 'Is it a great thing, that they who sow unto you spiritual things,' should be permitted to 'reap' one handful of 'your carnal things' when so great a portion of them is suffered to run to waste?

"Permit us to ask you, if every other person is entitled to recompense for his labor, by what law, either of **God** or man, are we bound to labor, we

say not without an equitable compensation, but without even a sufficiency for present subsistence? Is labor in spiritual things the only kind of labor which deserves no recompense, and for which it is presumptuous to demand it? Does a person, by becoming a minister of the Gospel, forfeit the rights which belong to him as a man? Or does the law of God condemn in his case as a proof of a worldly spirit, that regard to his temporal provision which in every other man is a matter of prudence and an act of duty? We are bound to warn you, that 'if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.' But must the matter be reversed when the case is ours? Must we violate the plainest dictates of duty to our families, in order to be brought to act a part becoming Christian ministers? If we possess property of our own, must we expend it, without necessity, in your service? must we render you dependent on our generosity, and at the same time rob our families of their rights? Or, if we have none, as is generally the case, must we, because you are worldly-minded, on pain of being reckoned so ourselves, suffer ourselves and our families to starve? No. We serve a good Master, who never exacted our services in the Gospel on such hard terms. When He sent us to labor among you, He committed us and our families to your protection. We are not, as some men talk, dependent on your charity for what you please to bestow; we have a claim upon your justice for what is equitable. We are entitled, in the name of the God whom we serve, to demand bread for our-

selves and the children whom He hath graciously given us.

“We do not presume to state precisely what the provision is which it is your duty to bestow. This must be regulated by the circumstances of the times, the place of our residence, the necessities of our families, and the measure of your ability; for that provision may be liberal at one period, or in one situation, which would be altogether inadequate in another. We desire not to be elevated to a rank in society above that in which our station entitles us to move; but to enjoy, in our proper station, what will place us above the fears of want and the anxieties of care; what will furnish us with the necessaries, and some of the comforts of life; what will enable us to educate our children, be just to the world, hospitable to the stranger, and kind to the poor. Were we placed among a people so few and so poor as to be unable to furnish us with comforts, otherwise than by depriving themselves of necessaries, we trust that we would be reconciled to subsist on the homeliest fare till Providence should otherwise provide for us; but we are not convinced that this is our duty when we labor to hundreds, many of whom possess, if not affluence, a moderate competency of worldly goods.

“Sit down, you who have any skill in figures, and satisfy yourselves at leisure, whether we complain without reason. Place our stipends in one column, and our necessary expenditure in the other. Value such articles as our manses require in order to be decently furnished; stock our libraries with such a moderate store of books as justice to you renders it necessary we should possess; make

us such an allowance for suitable dress for ourselves and families as will prevent us from being ashamed ; give us wages for servants to attend to our household affairs ; pay our charges for travelling to presbyteries and synods, and to assist brethren in the dispensation of divine ordinances ; add the amount of the public and local taxes which we are obliged to pay ; grant us a little, that we may occasionally entertain a friend as becomes our station, and may not shut our door against the strangers who expect to be hospitably received ; and entrust us with somewhat to enable us, as we are enjoined, to set an example to our flocks and to the world of compassion to the poor, of public spirit, and of readiness for every good work. When you have cast up the sum and deducted it from the stipends which we receive, inform us how much remains, we say, not to hoard, for the future, or to dissipate in luxury, but to give bread to our families, and education to children whom we cannot endow. We anticipate the surprise you must feel, that our spirits have not been crushed ere now by the difficulties of our situation ; and you will give us credit for economy, if we are not in debt. We tremble for ourselves, lest, if we are not 'fed with food convenient for us,' we should acquire mean habits unworthy of our dignity and our station as ministers ; lest we should contract vices which will blast our hitherto fair reputation, and cause religion to be 'wounded in the house of its friends ;' lest we should become involved in debts which we are unable to pay ; lest we should sink into a state of mental dejection, which will incapacitate us for the discharge of our spiritual duties ; lest, in fine, when

old age overtakes us, or disease seizes on us, we should murmur at the good providence of God, and be unwilling to 'die at his commandment,' because we must leave a family, young, uneducated, unprovided for, on the mercy of persons who were unkind to us while we lived, and will forget us and our widow and orphans after we are dead.

"Some of you, perhaps, excuse yourselves for the neglect of duty to your minister hitherto by professing ignorance of his necessities. You never observed anything in his appearance, or in that of his family, which indicated want, and you never heard him complain. If, indeed, he has suffered, affecting cheerfulness while he was burdened in spirit, and making a show of plenty while in private he was struggling with want, forgive him this wrong. But was it kind in you never to reflect on his circumstances, or to wait, if you suspected them, till he should be constrained to ask relief? A favor derives much of its value from the grace with which it is bestowed. Your unsolicited attention to his comfort would have had a double relish, as affording not only a relief to him from his embarrassments, but an unequivocal proof of your love.

"Recollect that if every article of life is dearer to you than formerly, as well as to your minister, it is he that suffers, not you. Your wages, your profits, have increased with the increase of charge, while his stipend continues the same. He who gave five shillings *per annum* for the support of the Gospel when he earned only one shilling per day, must be equally able to give ten when he earns two, and fifteen when he earns three; and when he does so, he does not in reality give more. You are

able in general to give, not only in proportion to the rise of your wages and profits but even in a higher proportion. Though your own living costs you more than in former times, you are not poorer, you are richer than when it cost you less. And surely, if you are able to provide not only the same articles of life, and the same kind of clothing, but both in greater abundance and of superior quality, it will not be an easy matter to convince an impartial person that you are not able to raise the stipend of your minister to an equality in respect of value to what it formerly was ; and even to augment it, that, along with you, he may enjoy a greater portion of the conveniences and comforts of life.

“ Remember that your minister is only a stipendiary during life or good behavior. The stipend expires with himself. It is not enough, therefore, that he enjoys barely a sufficiency for present comfortable subsistence. What is to become of his family when he dies? Must not this thought rush often into the mind of the most spiritually-minded man, and can he feel easy when his reflections are irresistibly forced into the following train? ‘ My stipend has at no period exceeded my expenditure ; my utmost economy has not enabled me to lay up anything in store ; when I die, my congregation, among whom I have labored these many years, will treat my family as other congregations have treated the families of their ministers—they will perhaps defray the charges of my funeral ; they will pay up to my mourning widow, or, if already paid, not demand back from her the stipend of the current half-year, for the whole of which death did not permit me to labor ; they will boast of their

generosity for having done so much beyond their obligations, and while they talk with respect of my memory, will leave my widow and my orphans to starve.'”

An adequate provision for the ministers of religion, such as God made under the Jewish, and Dr. Peddie, following in the steps of St. Paul, pleads for under the Christian economy, is so closely and certainly connected with the power of the pulpit and the welfare of precious souls—with the grand purposes of Christ's death and the progress of his kingdom, that I regard it as one of the greatest questions of the day. Having been obliged to resign pastoral work, and no longer depending for my support on its remuneration, I feel the more free to press this matter on the Christian public; and for this purpose, since it was thought likely to serve the end in view, I will now proceed to draw on the substance of an address which I delivered to the General Assembly of the Free Church when I had the honor to preside over its deliberations.

The calamity which I stand in dread of, and which is, next to the withdrawal of the divine blessing, the greatest a church can suffer, is, that the rising talent, genius, and energy of our country may leave the ministry of the Gospel for other professions. “A scandalous maintenance,” Matthew Henry says, “makes a scandalous ministry.” That adage I would proclaim in the public ear, and press especially on the office-bearers of the church, having that confidence in their sense of justice as to feel that there is not one in the house but will rejoice that I have taken up this topic. If “a scandalous maintenance makes a scandalous ministry,” I'll give

you another sentence equally true,—“The poverty of the manse will develop itself in the poverty of the pulpit.” I have no doubt about that ; and that is the evil I implore you to avert. Genteel poverty !—may you never know it !—genteel poverty, to which some doom themselves, but to which ministers are doomed, is one of the greatest evils under the sun. Give me liberty to wear frieze, and I will thank no man for a black coat—give me liberty to rear my sons as laborers, and my daughters as domestic servants, and the manse may enjoy the same cheerful contentment that sheds sunlight on many a pious and lowly home. But to place a man in circumstances where he is expected to be generous and hospitable, to open his hand as wide as his heart to the poor, to give his family a liberal education, to breed them up according to what they call genteel life,—to place a man in these circumstances, and deny him the means of doing so, is enough, but for the hope of heaven, to embitter existence. In the dread of debt, in many daily mortifications,—meeting, perhaps, some old acquaintance whom he dare not ask to his table, lest his more prudent wife should frown upon his extravagance,—in harassing fears of what shall befall wife and children when his head lies in the grave, a man of cultivated mind and delicate sensibilities has trials to bear more painful than the privations of the poor. Though in pleading for a better provision for ministers of God’s word, I can say with Paul, “I have used none of these things, neither do I write these things that they may be so done to me,” let me say, I have tasted of others’ bitter cup. It is a bitter cup ; and my heart bleeds for brethren who have never told

their sorrows—concealing under their cloak the fox that gnaws at their vitals.

I do not altogether blame the people ; I believe with the poet, that more ill is done for want of thought than for want of heart. The full truth has never been told in the public ear as I would tell it now. The livings, I do not say of this Church only, but of the ministers of all Churches, are inadequate ; and I should rejoice if my words went forth on the wings of the press to do good to United Presbyterian, Congregational, and also Established Church ministers. I rejoice to see the latter getting an addition from their teinds. They feel the same discomforts as others ; nor are they sustained and cheered by our hopes. I feel confident that the rising tide of liberality will by-and-by float us over the bar into better and happier waters ; but they can hardly expect from parliament what I look for with the utmost confidence from the enlarged and enlightened liberality of our people.

I know some do not like to hear of these matters ; but those who like least, need most to hear of them. Some—not many, I hope—are like an honest man belonging to Aberdeenshire (I tell the story as I heard it), who, on being asked what he thought of the Free Church, replied, “ Oh, I admire her principles, but I detest her schemes ! ” But whether people will hear, or whether they will forbear, let me now state two or three ways in which the claims of ministers are evaded. I will give you cases—these are best remembered.

In my native town, long years ago, there lived an excellent Seceder minister. His son was appointed his assistant and successor. The congregation gave

the father £100 a-year, and the son £80—a living better in those days than most ministers enjoy in these—a provision very creditable to the good old Seceders. At length the old man died, and his people met to consider what stipend should be allotted the son, now their sole pastor. The question was not whether they would allow him £180—which it ought to have been, seeing that they had proved themselves able to do so; but the matter, assuming a less generous shape, was whether they would give the son the £100 the father had received, or keep him at the £80. Well, the question was put; whereupon an honest weaver rose, and declared himself clear for keeping the incumbent at the lowest figure. He saw no reason why ministers should receive more for weaving sermons than he for weaving webs—alleging in proof of the advantage of a poor stipend that the church never had better, nor so good, ministers as when “they went about in sheepskins and goatskins, and lived in caves and holes of the earth.” If any sympathize with the weaver, I answer that I have an insuperable objection to “caves and holes”—they create damp; and, secondly, as to the habiliments, it will be time enough to take up that question when our people are prepared to walk Princes-street with us—not in this antique Moderator’s dress, but in the more primitive and antiquated fashion of goatskins with the horns on. So I dispose of such wretched evasions.

I pass on to a second, expressed in a remark which looks very pious; and is all the worse for that. It was made by a lady to the wife of an excellent minister, who, as many have been obliged

to do, kept boarders to eke out a living that some of the merchant princes in his congregation could have paid out of their own pocket, and never missed it. This lady, rustling in silks, and in a blaze of jewels, went to pay a visit to her minister's wife—more a lady than herself, with the exception of the dress. She condoled with her on their straitened circumstances, and looking into the pale, careworn face of the excellent woman, said, as she turned up the white of her eyes, "But, my dear, your reward is above!" From the bloodless lips of some poor sinner in a cold unfurnished garret, where the man of God, facing fever and pestilence, has gone to smooth a dying pillow and minister consolation to life's last dark hour, I have been thankful to hear the words, "Your reward is above,"—but from silks and satins, how disgusting! the vilest cant, enough to make religion stink in the nostrils of the world! Does that saying pay the minister's stipend? Will it pay his accounts? Fancy him going to his baker or butcher, and instead of paying down money, turning up the white of his eyes to say, "Your reward is above." I fancy they would reply, "Oh, no, my good sir, that does not pay the bill!" Well, I say what does not pay tradesmen's bills does not pay minister's stipends.

There is a story much to the purpose here, told of Christmas Evans, who, during a large part of his pastorate in Anglesea, received for his labors only £17 *per annum*, and never more than £30—a miserable support for a man who gave himself up with singleness of heart to the work of the ministry. His biographer, himself a Welshman, says, "It must be numbered among the anomalies of Welsh

religious life, that it combines an insatiable appetite for sermons with a marvellous disregard for the temporal comfort of the preacher." It is a pity that this anomaly is not peculiar to Welsh religious life. On one occasion a woman said to Mr. Evans, as he came out of the pulpit, "Well, Christmas Evans, *bach*, I hope you will be paid at the resurrection; you have given us a wonderful sermon."—"Yes, yes, Shan *fach*," was his quick reply, "no doubt of that; *but what am I to do till I get there?* And there is the old white mare that carries me; what will she do? for her there will be no resurrection." He might, it has been remarked, have said more, and with great justice. He might have added, "Yes, yes, I know that for my labors and sacrifices I shall be paid there. But what will *you* do? What pay will you receive then for your stinginess now?" That is the question which should come home to the hearts of all who combine an appetite for the labors of the servant of God with a marvellous disregard for his temporal wants and comforts. There are two ways in which congregations sometimes display this niggardliness. (1.) In their shabby contributions to their minister during the days of his activity. They take all they can get from him, and give as little as possible in return. (2.) In their miserable provision for him in the days of his infirmity and old age. Can anything be more heartless than the pittance on which he is often left to starve? The pretext of leaving him to be repaid at the resurrection, as in the case of Evans, is a barefaced hypocrisy, which must be utterly abominable to God.

There is a third way of evading this duty I want

the Christian public to look at. I have heard it myself. It is this: Ministers should not be rich! I am not seeking to make ministers rich. I have no ambition to be rich. But it is a sweet thing to be able to pour blessings into an empty cup; and I want to know why I should be deprived of that pleasure more than others? Have not I a heart as well as other men? Have not I pity as well as other men? Do not I delight in hearing and receiving the widow's blessing as well as other men? More than that, I ask what reasons there are against ministers being rich which do not apply with equal, perhaps with greater, force to others? Who dare say that ministers would make a worse use of money than others? Are those who have received a liberal education, who hold a sacred office, who occupy a public position, whose piety should be fired at the altars where they minister, and whose sympathies are daily moved by the misery they see, more likely than other men to make a bad use of money? Was Agur's prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," made only for them? I tell him who tells me that ministers should not be rich, that that prayer is as fit for his lips as for mine. Whether ministers are less likely to make a good and noble use of riches than others is a question which I answer by pointing to the Church of England. In her only do you find many men of private fortunes holding a holy office; and is it not a fact, one most honorable to her clergy, that in building schools and paying teachers, in erecting churches and paying curates, in other benevolent and Christian agencies, a very large number of the ministers of the Church of England pay as much

out of their private fortunes as they get annually from their livings? Show me the class—bankers, merchants, physicians, farmers—that does the like.

All I ask is that ministers should have such a maintenance as shall relieve them from evils that I shall call poverty. Poverty in a good cause is a noble thing. Let none, therefore, stagger at the word; nor, in such a cause as ours, at the thing. I have no sympathy with the man who quarrelled with the word *poor* in the inscription proposed for Mr. Pitt's monument; which was something to this effect—that millions had passed through his hands, and that he died poor. The noblest thing ever said about a statesman! But this gentleman, of very squeamish sensibility, said, "Oh, I don't like that word *poor*. Should it not be, that though millions had passed through his hands, he died in *embarrassed* circumstances?" Still poverty is an evil; and what I plead for is, that my brethren should have livings adequate to their position in society, and adequate to the expenses in which they are necessarily involved.

But there are worse evils behind than any I have yet exposed. The result of the inadequate livings of our ministers is, or, as sure as the tide will flow to-morrow, will be—unless the Christian people take steps to prevent it—that the rising talent and genius of our country will go to other professions; leaving the pulpit to weakness or fanaticism. That were an unspeakable calamity. I would hold out no lure to avarice, nor tempt any to enter the Church by the hope of wealth; but I wish no man to be deterred from it by the certainty of poverty. That stands as a barrier at this moment between

the Church, and the higher and middle classes of society; and I ask you to remove it. How many noble, large-hearted, Christ-loving office-bearers have we in our Church! yet I wish to know how many of these gentlemen engaged in Glasgow in commerce, or in Edinburgh in the honorable pursuits of the law, or other learned professions, are at this moment training one son for the ministry? They give us their silver. I want their sons—a gift more precious than their silver. And why, but that the pulpits of the Church may present a fair representation of its position as well as of its piety? No man will suspect me of undervaluing the humble classes of the people. Who does, does me a cruel wrong. If I have lived for one thing more than another, it has been to rescue and raise the very poorest of the poor. I stand by the people, and believe the humbler classes in their religious and other views, to be sounder—take them all in all—than any other. Some of my most valued and best respected brethren, ornaments to this Church and to their country, have sprung from a humble origin; and should the Church of Christ lose the working classes, she loses, under God, her best support.

Nevertheless, to me it seems most important and desirable that the ministry of the Church should represent the position as well as the piety of its membership; that there should be a fair proportion of what we call well-born and well-bred men in the ministry, to give it a tone removed from vulgarity, or that thing, still more offensive, called vulgar gentility. The humbler classes in our Church have indeed no reason to fear that the upper will betray

their interests. The men that went out to the hill-side in the days of the Covenant, and preached in the face of Claverhouse's dragoons, were many, if not most of them, what are called "well-born men." The Erskines and Moncrieffs, the first seceders, were also men of family and position. Well, what I desire is, to see all classes in our pulpits—the piety, and genius, and talent of every class. But at this moment you cannot reckon on youths from the middle class coming forward to the ministry. Those who give their gold and silver to the treasury of the Church, are not giving their sons to its ministry. Such is the fact; account for it how you may. I for one am not astonished at it. Have not I heard ministers themselves say, that, having felt so keenly the poverty and difficulties of their position, the last profession they would rear a son to was the Church? I don't sympathize with that. At the same time, I cannot greatly censure either them, or our laity. It is easy to understand how a devout man should say, "I am at liberty to consecrate myself to Christ and poverty; but am I at liberty, in the case of that boy who has given evidence of genius, and some promise of piety, and whom a turn of my hand, under God's providence, may turn this way or that,—am I at liberty, at an age when he is not capable of fully judging for himself, to devote him to a life of privations, especially when he may serve the Lord in employments that involve no particular hardships?"

That is a grave question; nor can it be doubted that it is the poverty of ministers which keeps our intelligent and pious laymen from doing what I am anxious they should feel free to do—give their sons,

the best and brightest of them, to the pulpit. I want this "stone of offence" removed. People talk with senseless horror of the bait of riches, the temptation of wealth; but let them think of this, that they do not get rid of the temptations of wealth by a mean and shabby stipend,—nothing of the kind. A living of £100 or £150 is as great a bait to a peasant's son as one four times that amount were to the son of a manufacturer, or merchant, or lawyer, or physician. The only difference is, that if people are to be moved by mercenary influences to enter the ministry, with a low stipend you draw the whole of your clergy from the lower classes of the people. But that would prove no gain. Low livings, therefore, afford no security against men seeking to enter the ministry from low motives; indeed, in the only case recorded in Scripture where a man betook himself to the priest's office from mercenary motives, the stipend was a very mean one—but ten shekels of silver, his meat, and a suit of clothes. What I plead for is such a provision, and only such a provision, for the ministers of religion as shall deliver them from the painful trials and narrow pinching circumstances under which many at this hour are secretly groaning.

Let me address the wealthy members of our Church—those who hesitate about giving their sons to the ministry, from a very natural dread of the privations which would be their doom. I say, "You have the remedy in your own hands. I tell you kindly but plainly that you are without excuse." I can well understand an affectionate and prudent father saying, "I may give my money, but am I at liberty to give my son, to the Lord; and so cast

him without his full consent on a sea of troubles?" But there is no occasion he should ever know the troubles you dread. You can insure him against them. Do not hundreds of wealthy and worldly men who send their sons into the army give them an allowance sufficient to save them from the poverty of their inadequate pay? and why should not our wealthy and Christian men do the same for sons in the ministry? There is the remedy as I have seen it in a will which bequeathed a large share to the son who, having entered the ministry, had embraced a profession the most sacred, but yet the worst paid. If a youth devotes himself to the ministry, willing to give himself to poverty for the cause of Christ, I say to the father, Let him have a Benjamin's share; give him a double portion! Thus you can lay the ghost of poverty, and save your son from difficulties, and penury, and lifelong trials.

Another thing I venture to suggest. Why is it, I ask, that wealthy congregations do not give their ministers livings adequate to the position they occupy, and the expenses in which they are necessarily involved? The evil of small stipends throughout the Church is one it will take years to mend. But why do congregations which have numbers and wealth sufficient to provide their minister with an income such as his position requires, and his talents entitle him to, not do so? Why should talent and genius not insure the same measure of competency in the Church that they do in every other profession? Why should he who brings the richest gifts and graces to the highest office, be the only man so inadequately remunerated,

that, when his coffin is paid, his family have **nothing** left, and an appeal must be made to the generosity of the public? I admire the generosity that answers the appeal, but would admire more the justice that rendered it unnecessary. I see that an elder in Glasgow has proposed that there should be three or four livings in Edinburgh, three or four in Glasgow, and elsewhere throughout the Church, up to the mark of £1,000. I am not astonished at the proposal. It is every way wise. I can lay my hands on men in the Church who, if they had gone to the Bar, would have risen to the top of it; and not £500, but £5,000, or more, would have been their yearly income.

Under God, three grand powers are now moving the world,—the press, the platform, and the pulpit. I have no jealousy of the press or platform; but should they be allowed to monopolize the talent and genius of our country, it will be bad for the country, and bad for the Church of Christ. Alas for the day, when pulpits are proverbial for dulness, the Sabbath is a weariness, and the greatest of all professions has the smallest of men to fill it! When the power of moulding public opinion departs from the pulpit to pass to the press and platform, “the sceptre shall depart from Judah.” I call on people of every denomination to avert such a grave calamity, and beware how they starve the pulpit into weakness and contempt. Would to God that these words entered the hearts of pious parents, and enlisted for the ministry of the Gospel youths distinguished alike for genius and piety! Why should not our Christian youth come forward to embrace this noblest, though meanwhile poorest, of all pro-

fessions? Some years ago, leaving titles, estates, luxurious mansions, kind fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and blooming brides, many threw themselves on the shores of the Black Sea, to face frost and famine, pestilence and iron showers of death, under the walls of Sebastopol! And shall piety blush before patriotism? Shall Jesus Christ call in vain for less costly sacrifices—either of money or of men? Let those whom Providence has enriched, some with silver and some with sons, remember the touching question one wrote beneath a figure of our Lord stretched bleeding on the cross, “THIS THOU HAST DONE FOR ME, WHAT SHALL I DO FOR THEE?”

HIS GOVERNMENT.

Where a forest of masts rises along the docks of some great commercial seaport, or watched from the shores of the estuary by which, homeward or outward bound, they are perpetually passing, what a wonderful variety of vessels we see! the origin of all the fallen tree, or shapeless log, astride which man first ventured on the treacherous water. Some, hugging the land and creeping from port to port, are coasters of small burden; others, employed on long and distant voyages, float like leviathans on the deep,—their masts the tallest pines, their sails spread out to the gentle breeze, a cloud of snowy canvas: some bearing them to other countries or bringing them to ours, are laden with the fruits of peace; others, huge floating castles, are trod by combatants, and, with cannon looking grimly out at every porthole,

are armed for war. Some are constructed of wood, others of iron: some catching the wind in their wings move onward by help of sails, others, beating the water and leaving a foaming wake behind them, by the power of fire. But though, differing in size, form, material, purpose, or moving power, they are unlike in these respects, they are alike in this, each has a compass, an anchor, and a helm. Possessed by all, these can be dispensed with by none; it being impossible otherwise to make a successful voyage or avoid shipwreck—their fate who find in their moving home a coffin, and in the sea a moving grave.

On turning to the shore, its inhabitants, whether they dwell in town or country, present a corresponding, and even greater, variety of classes. Be they rich or poor, sitting solitary or in families, crowded in busy towns or lonely shepherds in quiet uplands, dwelling in huts or palaces, parents or children, masters or servants, magistrates or subjects, princes or peasants, kings or commons, the sheep of Christ's flock or its pastors, the Word of God is the one thing they have, or should have, in common—that book being as indispensable to them for a good life and a happy death, as compass, helm, and anchor to every ship that ventures on the sea. Divine in its origin, this wonderful and precious volume is so universal in its application, that none can say, "I have no need of thee!" Equally adapted to all classes, all countries, all times, all circumstances, all days of the week, all ages of the world, and all ages of human life, from the child, tottering by the side of a cradle to the old man tottering on the edge of a grave, we cannot

imagine a condition of life in which a man will not find instructions there to teach him how to fill it. There "in precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little," all men may read the principles that should guide them—and these set forth so plainly that he who runneth may read. But besides these, the finger-posts, as I may call them, that stand by the roadside to point the way, we have in Scripture characters—in this, that, and the other man—patterns to copy, living guides who go before us, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it." In this, its universal aptitude and application, the Bible may be compared to the atmosphere, which, descending into the depths of the lowest valleys, and rising above the summits of the highest Alps, holds the whole world in its embraces ; or to the great ocean, which washes every shore on earth, and encircles in its arms alike the largest continents and the tiniest rock that lifts its head out of the waste of waters.

No case affords a better illustration of this than that of Samuel—those who fill the highest positions in society, and all indeed who, whatever their position be, exercise authority over others, finding in him a living example of a ruler, and how to rule. Light of the cottage, the Word of God is of all books the best fitted to be the light of the palace also. I don't know that it is ; but by none should it be more frequently read, and more devoutly studied than by kings. So thought Dr. Coxe, Dean of Christ's Church, Oxford, and tutor to the prince, afterwards Edward VI. Writing of his pupil he says, "As concerning my lord and der

scholar, it is kindly done of you to desire so gently to hear from him and of his proceedings. We can now read, and, God be thanked, sufficiently. He understandeth and can frame well his three concordances of grammar, and hath made already forty or fifty pretty Latin verses, and is now ready to enter into Cato, to some proper and profitable fables of Æsop, and other wholesome and godly lessons that shall be devised for him. Every day in the mass-time he readeth a portion of Solomon's Proverbs for the exercise of his reading, wherein he delighteth much; and learneth there how good it is to give ear unto discipline, to fear God, to keep God's commandments, to beware of strange and wanton women, to be obedient to father and mother, to be thankful to him that telleth him of his faults." Other books—the works of great men and possessed of great merit—have been written for the use of princes in training for a throne; but in preference to all such, were we a prince's tutor, we should select the Bible; and for a pattern for rulers him whose name stands at the head of this chapter. America boasts her Washington; England her Hampden; Scotland her Wallace; Greece and Rome their patriots or patriot-kings; but among the few illustrious men whose deeds shine in the annals and whose names are embalmed in the heart of nations, where, in all history, sacred or profane, is there one so eminently fitted to rule as Samuel—who presents such a remarkable combination of mental power, the purest patriotism, and the highest piety?

He was a *patriotic* ruler.

i. His object was not the possession of power—

that for which so many kings and statesmen have had recourse to the meanest devices ; have trodden the foulest paths ; and, casting all honor to the winds, have abandoned the principles, and betrayed the friends of their life. How basely did Henry IV. desert the sacred cause for which, his white plume dancing in the thick of the fight, he had often led his followers to battle ! And from him who embraced Popery to win Paris, and, with its gay capital, the kingdom and crown of France, to such as by bribery have purchased meaner offices, what sacrifices of conscience, and virtue, and truth, have been offered at the shrine of power ! The crimes which some have committed to gain it have been without a parallel, unless those which others have committed to retain it. Unlike that grand old Roman who threw up the helm of the state and retired to plough his paternal acres, how many has the world seen clinging to power as a drowning man to a plank ; and to retain possession of it, resorting to the most dishonorable and vilest means ! For this purpose, once and again the sword of Joab was plunged into the heart of a rival ; to prop up his throne, Charles I., in Straf-ford, gave the neck of a devoted friend to the headsman's axe ; to secure their places and appease an angry country, a British ministry cast an admiral of the fleet to the mob, and hanged him up before the sun ; and Richelieu, a cardinal of the church, and chief minister of France, arranged that her armies should suffer an ignominious defeat—scrupling not, rather than that he should lose his place, that thousands of his gallant countrymen should lose their lives, and cement with their blood

the tottering fabric of his power. No man can have intelligently read the history of the past, or watched the events of his own day and the course of many who, amid its shifting scenes, have played their part on the stage of public life, without the painful conviction that there are few things in the world more rare than true patriotism; and few positions where a good man finds it more difficult to preserve his integrity than amid the temptations of politics and wiles of statesmanship. The arena there resembles more a sheet of ice than the compact, sandy floor on which the old Greeks and Romans met to fight for laurel crowns and victory. In the crooked policy they have pursued to gain or to retain place and power, what base things have great men done, and what bad things good men! —sometimes constraining us, as we read or hear of them, to ask, “What is man?” or to exclaim with David, “How are the mighty fallen; the weapons of war, how are they perished!”

A finer contrast to the general character of the princes and statesmen, and, whether they occupied a high or a low place, of the rulers of this world, we cannot imagine than that which Samuel presents. Place, honor, and power sought him; not he them. He became the judge of Israel, or its ruler, at the call of God; and when, without respect to his gray hairs and long years of honorable, successful service, an ungrateful country called him to resign his office, like the sun which looks largest at its setting, he never seems so great, so grand, as in the last scenes of his public life. It had been a sublime, though painful, spectacle to see this great man, wounded by ingratitude and smarting under

the stings of those he had nursed in his bosom, uncomplainingly, simply, cheerfully lay down his office. He did more than that. Remonstrating with the people, he warned them of the evils a king would bring in his train; and thereby exposed himself to unjust suspicions, and the foul tongues of many who would represent him as clinging to the possession of power rather than seeking the good of his country. And when Saul at length was fixed on as his successor, see how noble he bore himself to the man who was to thrust him from his seat! There is no more magnanimous thing in history. Rising above the weaknesses of our nature, he received Saul with the utmost courtesy, and treated him even with paternal kindness. Casting at him no jealous eye, far less the deadly javelin he cast at David, Samuel resigned the sceptre with more than the dignity of a king, and all the self-denial of a Christian. Like a father who instructs a beloved child, he counselled, he advised, he warned him; and leaving worldly rivals to thwart rather than help their successors, to rejoice over their errors rather than lament them, he clung to Saul. He supported his authority so long as he could; and when at length the sins of his successor parted them forever, Samuel retired sad and sorrowful to his home in Ramah. Unlike those statesmen who are driven from place only to brood over their wrongs, and stir up the people to recall them, he lamented the errors and bewailed the fate of him to make way for whom he himself had been thrust from power and honor. I cannot fancy a nobler or more touching picture than this venerable, grand old man, who had been

the safety and honor of the commonwealth, sitting in his house forgetting all his personal wrongs in grief for the public calamity, and allowing the evening of his days to be darkened with sorrow for the crimes and misfortunes of Saul. If ever breast was pure of selfish ambition and the love of power, it was his who exposed himself to this honorable reproach—to whom the Lord appeared, saying—“How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?”

2. His object was not his own personal aggrandizement. “*L'état, c'est moi*” (“The State, it is I”), said Louis XIV. to one who happened to speak in his presence of the interests of the State. A striking picture that of one who, though called “the great,” was an incarnation of the worst passions of human nature—of selfishness, pride, heartless cruelty, insatiable ambition, and abominable lust!—a truer picture, though drawn by his own hand, than any left by Bossuet, or Massillon, or the other flatterers of a bloody tyrant and ruthless persecutor of God's heritage. What sacrifices have been offered at the feet of this idol, I! To gratify the ambition, the avarice, the lust, the vengeance, and the pride of kings, of ministers of state and other rulers, the interests of commerce and industry have been ruined; beautiful countries desolated; the liberties of mankind trodden under foot; nations impoverished; happy homes turned into smoking ruins, and peaceful fields into scenes of blood and slaughter. We meet with no such scenes under the rule of Samuel. We hear neither the wail of widows, nor the shout of battle, nor any prophet who wrings his hands, crying, “O that my

head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Unlike those that had preceded, or were to follow, the sword slept in its scabbard all the days of Samuel—that great battle excepted which inaugurated his reign, and was won by his prayers. Happy days, these, for Israel, when, each man sitting at his cottage door, under his own vine and fig-tree, with none to make him afraid, the people rested from arms; enjoying in their homes the security, and reaping in their fields the fruits, of peace!

Under his government—Samuel himself the highest example of it—piety flourished; the stream of justice ran pure; the rights of all classes were respected; private property was safe; and the public burdens, pressing lightly, were easily borne by a prosperous people. No taxes to carry on such wars as David's, or maintain the costly splendor of Solomon's reign, were imposed on the nation. Saul was perpetually fighting; in the extension of his kingdom, or the suppression of intestine commotions, the sword was seldom out of David's hand; while, through the boundless expenses of Solomon's harem, and royal parade, and public buildings, and voluptuous as well as refined indulgences, the peace of his reign must have proved more burdensome to the country than the wars of his predecessors: and I can fancy, when old men described the happy and quiet life they led in the good days of Samuel, how many felt that when their fathers clamored for a king, on that occasion, as old Bishop Latimer said of another, the *vox populi* was rather the *vox diaboli*

than the *vox Dei*—the voice of the devil than the voice of God.

A rare example of such virtues, in these days especially, Samuel's hands, I remark also, were as clear of bribes as of blood. The public good his only object, he neither aimed at political ascendancy nor pecuniary aggrandizement. Neither animated with the love of power, nor, like Herod of worms, eaten up with the love of money, he made no use of the opportunities his office afforded to enrich himself; and very probably retired from his post a poorer man than he entered on it. Though not culpable by indulging them like Eli, yet, like Eli and David, and other good men, unhappy in his sons, he had bitter cause to regret their bad behavior; but had this to alleviate his sorrow, that he had set them no bad example. A practice too common then, and still, in eastern countries, and apt to be followed wherever men holding offices of trust are inadequately rewarded, Samuel's sons, whom, in his old age, he had associated with himself in the government of the country, resorted to dishonorable and dishonest means. They took bribes of suitors, and sold justice for money. But his own hands were clean. No stain tarnished the brightness of the old man's name; nor, though feeling, no doubt, all the partialities of a father for his children, did he attempt to palliate their crimes, or screen them from public indignation. Walking in his integrity; fearing God, but no man's face; upright; the soul of honor; his bosom glowing with the purest patriotism, how grand is his last appearance on the stage of public life!—grander far than all the pomp and lustre which, amid the

blaze of beauty, the blare of trumpets, and the roar of cannon, surrounds the coronation of a king. The sun never looked down on a more touching and impressive spectacle. With Saul, their anointed king, towering head and shoulders, in royal vestments, above the crowd of nobles, the tribes of Israel are met ; and Samuel, bent with age and dismissed from office, is there to meet them. Conscious of rectitude, nor fearing the face of any man, he comes to challenge them. They had rejected him ; he is there to ask them what grounds they had for doing so. Treated as one who had betrayed his trust, he calls on them to allege it openly if they dare, and to prove it if they could. Long years of service, now forgotten, they had repaid with base ingratitude ; and he is here, old and gray-headed, to ask them what he had done to suffer such an ignominious fate. Not that he had clung to office ; or, mortified at the change, would retire into private life to pass the evening of his days in regrets at the loss of power and popularity—by no means. But he had his own character, and that of religion also, to vindicate ; and still aiming, even when he stood on his defence, at the public good, he had to teach his successor with what integrity to live and for what ends to rule. So coming to the front—to touch surely the hearts of many, as he stood with his hoary head and venerable form beneath the heavens of that God he had served so long and well, and face to face with a people whose ingratitude to him could not quench his love for them—he spoke out this lofty and noble appeal : “I am old and gray-headed, and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Be-

hold, here I am ; witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed : Whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind my eyes therewith ? and I will restore it you. The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day that ye have not found aught in my hand !” And thus, with a dignity which nothing could surpass, he retired from public life amid, I trust, the tears and acclamations of the vast assembly—in point of lofty, unselfish, high-minded patriotism, the model of a ruler.

Samuel was a *pious, as well as patriotic, ruler.*

In wandering among the old houses of a picturesque and ancient capital one meets with curious vestiges of other days—of a time when these abodes, now abandoned to squalor and poverty, were gay with fair ladies, and plumed nobles, and belted knights, all long forgotten and mouldered to dust. Amid the pensive thoughts which the contrast between the present and the past, the scenes before our eyes and those which fancy calls up, suggests, it is a relief to find here and there something better than the vestiges of departed grandeur—evidences of piety clinging to these dingy tenements, like the wallflowers that impart beauty and fragrance to the stones of an old ruin. These are the inscriptions which our forefathers carved on the lintels of their doors, where, in Greek, or Latin, or English, in plain or old black letter, the passenger may still read, though defaced by the teeth of time, such texts as these—“Fear God and honor the king ;” “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in

vain that build it ;” “ The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want ;” “ The Lord is my refuge and my fortress ; in Him will I trust.” Thereby, while we consecrate our churches, some in one, some in another, fashion—they seem to have consecrated their very houses to God : declaring to all men that their rule was to be his law, and their resolution that of his servant Joshua—“ As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Thus I interpret the handwriting on the wall, the voice of its stones. And similar are the voices of those old chapels which hold the dust of kings, and often form the most interesting parts of the ruined and roofless palaces where once they held their courts. It would appear that in the rudest times of old an altar always rose near the throne ; and that an indispensable part of every palace, was the chapel, where he to whom others knelt, knelt to God ; and learned to remember that there was One above him whose throne overshadowed his ; at whose mercy-seat kings had to seek for mercy ; whose laws were to form the rule, and his glory the chief end of their government. It might be forgotten, nor may now once suggest itself to those who visit these scenes merely to gratify an antiquarian taste or an idle curiosity, but such customs had a pious origin ; and might teach us to approach these silent ruins with reverential feet, to think that if the wood out of the timber, and the stone out of the wall, were to speak, it would be in the words of Scripture, The name of that place shall be, The Lord is there !

Simply the vicegerent of God, and no king, Samuel had no palace in Israel ; the palace, if such it could be called, was the tabernacle, where God

dwelt within the curtains of the holy place. No armed guards protected the person, nor gorgeous retinue attended the steps of Samuel. No pomp of royalty disturbed the simple manner of his life, or distinguished him from other men; yet there rose by his house in Ramah that which proclaimed to all the land the personal character of its ruler, and the principles on which he was to conduct his government. In a way not to be mistaken, Samuel associated the throne with the altar; earthly power with piety; the good of the country with the glory of God. "He judged Israel," it is said, "all the days of his life, and went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all these places; and his return was to Ramah, for there was his house, and there he judged Israel, and there," it is added, "*he built an altar unto the Lord.*" That altar had a voice no man could mistake. In a manner more expressive than proclamation made by the voice of royal heralds with painted tabards and sounding trumpets, it proclaimed to the tribes of Israel that piety was to be the character, and the will of God the rule, of his government.

Happy the land which had its councils guided, and its borders defended, and even its battles won, by the prayers and piety of its ruler. Such a land was Israel in the days of Samuel. There was, indeed, but one battle fought during the whole course of his government; and his prayers won it. The field was the same as that on the disastrous day when the ark of God was taken, and "Ichabod, the glory is departed," was written on the banners of Israel. The field was the same and the foe the

same, but how different the issue ! The story recalls the day when, with Aaron supporting one arm and Hur the other, Moses sat on a hill apart, overlooking the combat ; and with his hands and prayers so turning, this or that way, the bloody tide of battle, that Amalek prevailed when these fell down, and Israel when they rose again to heaven. In terror of the Philistines, who had come up like a flood on their land, the people, trusting less to their own arms than to Samuel's power with God, repaired to him, saying, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us." Commonly, when danger overhangs a land, the ruler proclaims a fast, and calls on his people for their prayers ; but here—rare occurrence, and remarkable testimony to Samuel's piety—the people implore their ruler's prayers. Happy the land where religion has its choicest abode in the palace, saying, "This is my rest ; here will I dwell !" Happy the land where the hands that wield the sceptre have power with God ; and its inhabitants believe that with their ruler on his knees they shall have Heaven on their side.

So it fell out with Israel in the days of Samuel. On the eve of battle, "he took," we are told, "a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly unto the Lord, and cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him." The moment was that of the Philistines drawing near to battle ; and the result was this, that they found Samuel on his knees more formidable than a bannered host. He prays ; and suddenly his voice is drowned in the roar of elements. God himself descends into the fight ; and the tribes that had come up to battle

—to slay and be slain—had nothing to do but slay ; to hang on the broken ranks of their enemies—pursue and kill them. “The Lord thundered with a great thunder on the Philistines, and discomfited them,” says the inspired historian ; “and they were smitten before Israel.” Such good, though bloody, work did prayers and piety achieve that day ; and for long ages afterwards, in the very field that was once the scene of a disastrous defeat, a great gray stone stood up, a monument of a divine deliverance, and of a victory won by the prayers of him who raised it there—calling the name of it Ebenezer, saying, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us !”

Unlike those days the hues of whose bright and gorgeous dawn are succeeded by a gloomy change, —clouds that, gathering like foes around him, close in upon the sun, and spread, and thicken, and burst out at length into lashing rain and roaring tempest, making the day, down to its close, belie all the promises of the morning,—the close, and indeed the whole course of Samuel's public life, were in beautiful harmony with its commencement. He fulfilled all a fond and pious mother's hopes. He disappointed none. God was the centre around which he, as well as heaven, turned. In all his difficulties he repaired to God for counsel. The laws which governed his acts as a statesman and his decisions as a judge were those of God's Word ; and, unlike this world's statesmen, never turned aside by considerations of expediency, of this or that present advantage, he steered his course by those principles of eternal truth and justice which give consistency to conduct ; because fixed as the

pole star that, changing neither with seasons nor circumstances, abides immovable in the sky—sure guide of the mariner, both in calm and tempest, along the rocky shore and out on the open sea. Some men die better than they live. England's great dramatist says of one who made a good end, that "nothing in life became him so much as the leaving it." But more may be said of Samuel's career—its close was not better, but in perfect harmony with its whole course. How inspired, with the loftiest piety and the purest patriotism, is the farewell oration he addressed to Saul and the assembled tribes ere the curtain fell, and he bade a last adieu to office and earthly power: "Turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way; only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things He hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both you and your king."

What an example Samuel presents to our magistrates, our judges, our members of parliament—to all entrusted with authority, from the Queen to the humblest parent whose kingdom is the narrow walls of a household: and how should all who love their God and country pray that every post of honor and of public trust may be filled with a man of the type of Samuel! The fear of man bringeth a snare; but who, like Samuel, has the fear of God is raised

above it. The favor of God is life ; and who, like Samuel, seeks it will not be drawn aside by that of man. God is the judge of all, both of the quick and of the dead ; and who, like Samuel, carries a sense of that to the bench of justice will keep the ermine of his robes unstained, and give righteous judgment ; who, like Samuel, takes the word of God for his rule, and looks to the recompense of reward, may meet with the ingratitude, but will never betray the interests of the crown or of his country. I put unlimited confidence, indeed, in no man—"How have the mighty fallen ; and the weapons of war, how have they perished !" But I put little confidence of any kind in that man, whatever his office be, who has not the fear of God before his eyes, and higher motives of action than belong to earth and end with time. Religion is the root of honor ; piety the only true foundation of patriotism ; and the best defence of a country, a people nursed up in godliness—of such virtue, energy, and high *morale*, that, animated with a courage which raises them above the fear of death, they may be exterminated, but cannot be subdued. It is not, as some allege, our blood, with its happy mixture of Celtic, Saxon, and Scandinavian elements, but the religion of our island—our Bibles, our schools, our Sabbaths, our churches, and our Christian homes—which, more than any and than all things else, has formed the character of its inhabitants ; and to that more than to the genius of its statesmen, or to its fleets and armies, Britain owes her unexampled prosperity, and the peace that has brooded for a hundred years unbroken on her sea-girt shores. Let us be grateful for this ; and resolved

to regard the ark of God—our religion—as the palladium of our country ; let us devoutly recognize in its happy fortunes the same providence as marked, and rewarded, the pious rule of Samuel ; of which this notable circumstance is recorded, “SO THE PHILISTINES WERE SUBDUED, AND THEY CAME NO MORE INTO THE COAST OF ISRAEL ; AND THE HAND OF THE LORD WAS AGAINST THE PHILISTINES ALL THE DAYS OF SAMUEL.”

Jonathan the Friend.

THERE is a bay that, throwing out to sea two bold headlands, sweeps with deep and graceful curve into the land. It is girdled by lofty walls of wave-washed and weather-beaten rock, which exclude any view of the fields and farms that lie beyond. No situation more lonely! Yet on its long reach of yellow sands, with no companion nor sound but the measured dash of billows, nor sign of life but the white wing of a sea-gull, or a lone ship sailing on the distant rim of ocean, I have not felt any sense of solitude there; or, if felt, it was pleasing rather than painful. And so has it been in other equally lonely circumstances. Once when, belated in a Highland glen, I stood alone under frowning crags and dark mountains on the silent margin of its mossy loch, with thick gloom all around, save where the last lights of day, touching the upper end of the waters, turned them into a sheet of silver; and once also when from the cairn of a Scottish alp, I looked around on a tumbling sea of hills, nor, save a blue thread of smoke that curled up from the far verge of the forest, saw a sign of human life, or indeed any living object but an eagle, which, pausing on its flight in these realms of air, hovered for a little overhead, sweeping round and round to examine with keen and curious glance

him that had intruded on her lone domains. Campbell, the poet, has painted in vivid colors the loneliness, the solemn solitude, of the last living man :

“I saw a vision in my sleep,
 That gave my spirit strength to sweep
 Adown the gulf of Time !
 I saw the last of human mould
 That shall Creation’s death behold,
 As Adam in her prime !
 The sun’s eye had a sickly glare,
 The earth with age was wan,
 The skeletons of nations were
 Around that lonely man !

Some had expired in fight—the brands
 Still rusted in their bony hands ;
 In plague and famine some.
 Earth’s cities had no sound nor tread ;
 And ships were drifting with the dead
 To shores where all was dumb.”

Yet it were not there, nor is it anywhere so much as among his fellows, and in crowds especially, man would feel most lonely. It has been truly and beautifully said of a devout man in a desert, on a lone moor, or in a death-desolated house, with no other company but God, that when most alone he is least alone ; but it may be as true of a man surrounded by a mighty crowd and jostled on the busy streets, with friends and lovers far away, that when least alone he is most alone. Hence the force of the old Latin saying, *Magna civitas, magna solitudo*—“A great city, a great solitude.” That is true ; very true. For, to speak from personal experience—and thousands have felt the same—I never felt so lonely as long years ago, when, taking

days and nights to make the journey between Edinburgh and London, I was set down on a winter evening amid the glare and bustle and roar of the metropolis, among crowds which neither caring whether I lived or died, hardly left room to walk, and in a city among whose thronging millions I had but two acquaintances, and no friend.

In such a situation the presence of a crowd gives no feeling of companionship ; and with no expression of recognition or interest in us on any face we meet, to walk the streets is in some respects like walking alone in a gallery of portraits. The absence of friends makes the busiest place a solitude ; nor is there any vacuum Nature abhors more than that. She teaches us to seek a heart that beats in unison with our own ; looks of sympathy and kindness ; a bosom into which we can pour the secrets of our souls ; when burdens press heavy, an arm to lean on ; when our back is at the wall, an ally to stand fighting by our side ; in our difficulties a counsellor to advise with ; in our sorrows one to divide, and in our joys one to double them. This is so natural, and to possess such a friend is both so delightful and profitable, that, whether his home be a castle or a cabin, and he himself a king or a beggar, even though he was rich with the wealth of banks, and filled the earth with his fame, for a man to want friends, true friends, according to Lord Bacon, is to find this world a wilderness.

The value which all ages and countries have set on friendship may be estimated by the honors they have paid to it, and the care they have taken to embalm the memory of those whose lives have

afforded remarkable illustrations of what friendship could dare, and bear, and do. We have an example of this in the beautiful story of Damon and Pythias, where we see how it has filled the worst of men with admiration, disarming the hand and quenching the rage of tyrants. The first, a Pythagorean philosopher, was condemned to death by Dionysius; the execution of the sentence, however, being suspended in consequence of his obtaining leave to go home to settle his domestic affairs—a favor which the tyrant granted on condition of his returning by a stated day to suffer the penalty of death. The promise was given, but not reckoned sufficient. He dies on the spot, unless he finds a hostage—a friend who will pledge himself to die in his room. At this juncture Pythias steps forward; and delivering himself up to the hands of the tyrant, becomes Damon's surety—to wait his friend's return, or suffer in his stead. At length the day arrives and the hour; but no Damon. Pythias must be his substitute; and he is ready. Thanking the gods for the adverse winds that retarded the ship in which Damon sailed, he prepares to die, a sacrifice on the altar of friendship. And had fallen, but that before the blow descends, Damon rushes panting on the scene. Now the strange and friendly strife begins. Each is eager to die for the other; and each, appealing to Dionysius, claims the bloody sword as his right and privilege. Though inured to scenes of cruelty, the tyrant cannot look unmoved on such a scene as this. Touched by this rare exhibition of affection, he is melted: nor only remits the punishment, but entreats them to permit him hereafter to share their friendship and enjoy

their confidence. What an honor it were to the Gospel were there many instances of such friendship among its professors! Why should there not? Has not Jesus laid this injunction on us all, "Love one another, even as I have loved you?"

There is another, and almost equally remarkable, example of friendship told of such as never heard of Him who is the friend of sinners. It is so remarkable indeed that it procured divine honors to Orestes and Pylades from the Scythians—a race so bloody, rude, and savage, that they are said to have fed on human flesh, and made drinking-cups of their enemies' skulls. Engaged in an arduous enterprise, Orestes and Pylades, two sworn friends, landed on the shores of the Chersonesus to find themselves in the dominions and power of a king whose practice was to seize on all strangers, and sacrifice them at the shrine of Diana. The travellers were arrested. They were carried before the tyrant; and, doomed to death, were delivered over to Iphigenia, who, as priestess of Diana's temple, had to immolate the victims. Her knife is buried in their bosoms, but that she learns before the blow is struck that they are Greeks—natives of her own native country. Anxious to open up a communication with the land of her birth, she offers to spare one of the two, on condition that the survivor will become her messenger, and carry a letter to her friends in Greece. But which shall live, and which shall die? That is the question. The friendship which had endured for years, in travels, and courts, and battle-fields is now put to a strain it never bore before. And nobly it bears it. Neither will accept the office of messenger, leaving his fellow to the stroke of death. Each

implores the priestess to select him for the sacrifice ; and let the other go. While they contend for the pleasure and honor of dying, Iphigenia discovers in one of them her own brother. She embraces him ; and sparing both, flees with them from that cruel shore. Both are saved ; and the story, borne on the wings of fame, flies abroad, fills the world with wonder, and, carried to distant regions, excited such admiration among the barbarous Scythians, that they paid divine honors to Orestes and Pylades, and deifying these heroes, erected temples to their worship.

How far these old-world tales are true, and how far they may have been exaggerated by tradition, and received, like a wall which is covered and tinted with golden lichens, their glowing colors from the hands of time, it would be idle to inquire. But the legends must have had some foundation in truth—some gallant deed had been done to form the nucleus of such remarkable traditions. We should not like, at any rate, to part with that belief—such cases throwing a glory over our fallen humanity that we delight to linger on, as on those traces of beauty that survive the stroke of death ; as on the flowers that, rooted in its crevices and fed by dews and sunbeams, adorn the walls of some noble ruin. But to illustrate what a friend has been, and friends should be, we have a yet brighter example and more certainly truthful story in that of Jonathan—at once so touching and so tragic.

Many friendships—traceable to near neighborhood, a common playground, the same form at school, some accidental meeting on a road or in a room—spring from trivial circumstances. Growing

strong only with the progress of years, they resemble our streams which, though at length swelling into rivers, are at first but tiny rills; feeble in their beginning, and springing from mossy wells, of obscure and humble birth. It was not so with Jonathan's friendship. It finds its type in those rivers, the Rhine and Rhone for instance, which, fed by exhaustless snows, and springing into light in lofty regions, high above the sea to whose distant shores their waters wend, are rivers at their birth; bursting from the icy caverns of Alpine glaciers in full, impetuous flood. It had its origin in a very memorable event, and on one of the most notable days in the whole history of Israel.

The peasant had left his plough in the furrow, the fisherman his boat on the lake, the shepherd his flock to the care of boys and women; and gathering from the hills of Bethlehem, and the shores of Galilee, and the remotest ends of the country, its best and bravest sons had mustered to its defence. With Saul at their head and their fathers' swords in their hands, they have set the battle in array against the Philistines in the valley of Elam—yet shrink from it. They are appalled. A giant who stalks forth day after day into the valley that divides the opposing hosts, and challenges Israel, and blasphemes Israel's God, has struck the boldest with terror. No lingerer at home in such a crisis, no coward, but distinguished as much for his bravery as for his rank, Jonathan was there; and I can fancy how his heart was ready to burst with vexation, how he chafed and fretted, as, slowly retreating before the steps of this terrible antagonist, he obeyed his father's orders, and yield-

ing to the dictates of prudence, declined Goliath's challenge—refusing to fling away his life in such an unequal contest. Grieved at the insults cast on the arms of Israel; trembling with anxiety for his father's life and crown; wounded to the heart by the blasphemies of the uncircumcised Philistine; often withdrawing from the bustle and distractions of the camp to seek on his knees light and help from God, and cry to Him, in his despair of any help from man, "How long, O Lord, how long! Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: as smoke is driven away, so drive thou them away; as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish in the presence of God;" with such feelings I can fancy that of all the eyes that day turned on David, Jonathan's watched him with the greatest agitation. What astonishment and admiration he felt for the gallant stripling! what anxious prayers he put up on his behalf, as he saw him, clad in a shepherd's garb, his heart armed with faith, but his hand only with a sling, step out boldly from the lines to accept the challenge—to bring away the giant's head, or leave his own to feed the fowls of heaven! The stone sped on its fatal errand. Goliath falls; and with a shout that rends the air, Israel hails the conqueror. And when the stripling, so young and yet so brave, crowned with such honor and yet so modest, so full of love to his country and piety to his God, advances to lay his bloody trophy at the feet of Saul, Jonathan's whole heart flows out to him; he becomes at once the object of a deep and deathless love. It came to pass, to use the beautiful language of Scripture,

that, when David modestly replying to Saul's question, "Whose son art thou?" "I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite," had made an end of speaking, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. So their friendship began; and its continuance, under the most adverse circumstances, was even more remarkable than its commencement.

The friendships are few that survive years of separation; the shock of conflicting interests; the drain made on our old affections by new claims; the trials they are put to by infirmities of temper, by plain dealing with faults, by a manly independence, by requests refused, by favors unrequited, by the rivalries of business, by the partisanship that springs from creeds or politics, and by a thousand other nameless circumstances. Fragile as the flowers the winter frost traces on our windows, there are friendships that a breath will melt away. It may be very wrong and very pitiful, but, as the wise man says, "a whisperer separateth chief friends;" and who lives long lives to see so many, like leaves the frost has nipped, fall off, and the ties which friendships had formed, so often and sometimes so easily dissolved, that he comes to read with little astonishment, and no great sense of exaggeration, the words of one who, describing his relationships, said, "Though the church would not hold my acquaintances, the pulpit is large enough to hold all my friends."

Happily, there are friendships that stand the test of time and the severest strain; but among these, what poet or panegyrist has recorded with

glowing pen one to be compared with Jonathan's ? It is quite unique ; remarkable as his father's stature when Saul, shrinking, as great men have done, from an office of great responsibility, hid himself among the stuff, and, directed by God where to find him, the people "ran and fetched him thence : and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upward ; and Samuel said, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people !" The words of the poet may be justly applied to Jonathan,—

"None but himself could be his parallel."

For example, men will praise their friends, but how few are generous enough without jealousy to hear others praise them, at their expense, in eulogiums they feel to be disparaging to themselves. There is no passion more natural to us, man or child, than jealousy. See how it broke out against David from the lips of his own brother ! indignant at the stripling for talking as if he would meet the giant, and carry off the palm from his brethren and all the host of Israel, Eliab sharply rebuked him, asking, "Why camest thou down thither ? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness ? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart." And who that knows his own heart will refuse some sympathy to Saul for taking offence—however unjustifiable his way of expressing it—at the disparaging comparison in the song of the maidens when dancing before David, they sung, "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." We wonder not at Saul's offence, but at Jonathan's generosity. The song

that grated so harshly on his father's ear, stirred up nor envy, nor jealousy, in him. Rejoicing in another's honor, he hailed the rise of a sun that paled his own star; and though, as Saul's eldest son, standing next the throne, Jonathan was content to be second to the good, brave, gallant shepherd, who had gone forth in the name and strength of the Lord to shut the mouth of the blasphemer, and peril his life for the safety of his country and the honor of his God.

Then see what severe trials this friendship endured; and enduring, triumphed over. Saul's gloomy eye fixed on David, the javelin he hurled to pin him to the wall, the cries of his soldiers echoing from the rocks as they hunted the fugitive from cave to cave, and hill to hill, not more illustrating the words, "Jealousy is cruel as the grave; the coals thereof are coals of fire," than the friendship of Jonathan did those which follow, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it."

Happier in his eldest son than David in Absalom, than many fathers, and most kings, in theirs, Saul had a pious, most noble, brave, and dutiful son in Jonathan. What piety, for example, in the words he addresses to his armor-bearer, when, pointing across the gorge to a garrison of the Philistines, he proposed, single-handed, to attack it, saying, "Come and let us go over; it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few!" What exploit in the annals of war braver, or so brave, as that which followed—when, scaling their rocky fastness on his hands and knees, he leaped head-

long among a swarm of Philistines, and, receiving the battle on his single shield, mowed them down like grass before the scythe? Thus gloriously broke the day on Israel—filling the hearts of her warriors with courage for the coming battle; but, like many that rise with dawn of brightest promise, it had nearly set in the deepest gloom. The victory is won; but at what a price? His father has made a rash vow; and he now requires that Jonathan shall die. It was hard to part with wife and children, hard to leave the world in the flush of life and the very hour of victory, yet he submits himself to his father's will. Baring a bosom seamed and scarred with wounds suffered in that father's cause, he stands ready to receive the stroke—a sacrifice to filial piety; and had fallen, but that the people, brandishing swords red with the blood of the Philistines, broke out into open revolt, and throwing themselves before Saul, said, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation for Israel? God forbid: as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."

The reed that bends its head to a breath of wind, and the old gray rock which withstands the hurricane that strews the plain with trees and the foaming shore with wrecks, are not more unlike than Jonathan where his own interests, and the same Jonathan where David's interests were concerned. Such was the depth and power of his affection for his friend. Here neither Saul's entreaties, nor anger, nor violence, could move him. He would part with life to please his father, but

not with his love for David. When Saul, to the astonishment of the host, proposed to sacrifice his son to a rash and wicked vow, Jonathan neither made resistance nor remonstrance—like Him whose divine friendship he recalls, he “was dumb, opening not his mouth.” But when Saul threatens David’s life, he refuses obedience, and becomes the advocate of his friend ; in words replete with affection, a pious spirit, and unanswerable arguments, he pleads with his father ; he remonstrates with him, saying, “Let not the king sin against his servant, against David ; because he hath not sinned against thee, and his works to theeward have been very good : for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel : thou sawest it, and didst rejoice : wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause ?”

Saul makes many attempts to awaken Jonathan’s jealousy, and kindle in his son’s bosom the hatred that burned and raged in his own. But they are vain. Nor does he succeed any better when all his pent-up passions burst forth in volcanic fury on discovering that David, the object of his hatred, is to be the successor to his throne. In that discovery he flatters himself he holds a spell of power to turn Jonathan’s love into the bitterest hatred, and raise all the devil in his son. There was no devil to raise. The dreadful secret is revealed ; but whatever pain is inflicted, whatever struggle it cost, whatever tears it wrung from Jonathan’s eyes, it kindles no bad passions in that pious, generous, and loving heart.

If piety is shown by a regard to God and a child-

like submission to his sovereign will, by taking up our cross and denying ourselves daily that we may follow Christ, by saying, like Jesus himself, as he took the bitter cup of our sorrows from his Father's hand, "Father, not my will, but thine be done," what finer example of this grace than Jonathan? David is to supplant him; David is to enter on the honors and fortune he expected to enjoy; and out of the ruins of Saul's house, David is to build his own; yet Jonathan ceases not to regard him with unabated and the tenderest affection. For this his father loads him with cruel reproaches; and, borne away on the foaming torrent of his passions, insults the very name and memory of his mother; calling him "the son of a rebellious and perverse woman." But these reproaches—like the javelin his mad hand hurled at his son—are all in vain. Jonathan leaves the presence of his father to seek David, and warn him of what was no longer doubtful, his imminent danger. With what affection they meet; with what bitter sorrow and loving vows they part; tender as brave, "they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded; and Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever." Once again they met. It was in the wood of Ziph, and probably under the cloud of night. There, strong in faith and clinging to the hope of better days, Jonathan sets himself to comfort the friend of his bosom. "Fear not," he says to David, "for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel,

and I shall be next unto thee ;” and so, neither of them anticipating that this was to be their last meeting on earth, they parted—never to meet more ; Jonathan to leave behind him a name sacred to friendship, and enter, ere long, through a bloody passage into welcome rest ; David to mourn his loss, and cherish Jonathan’s sweet memory, and lay on his grave the finest wreath ever bedewed with tears and woven in honor of the dead.

Tender as a woman, and yet true as steel, overflowing with generous kindness, utterly devoid of selfishness, trusting as much as he was trusted, with a heart that reflected David’s as face answereth to face in water, Jonathan was the paragon and perfect pattern of a friend. Many a fond lie has been written on tombstones ; and with all their good qualities magnified by the tears through which we gaze on them, the dead appear fairer, dearer, and better than they ever seemed in life ; but Jonathan was altogether worthy of this grand eulogium :

“The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places : how are the mighty fallen !

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon ; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings : for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.

From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided : they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights ; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle ! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places.

I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !"

To make some practical use of this matter, I remark,—

1. Every one should seek and cultivate friendships. Man has no room in his heart to accommodate many friends ; but, as God said in Eden, it is not good that man should be alone. Isolation breeds selfishness, moroseness ; and these are apt to run into misanthropy. Those friendships which are essential to the happiness as well as the complete development of our nature, form, indeed, one of the most marked distinctions between us and those animals that resemble us in their social habits—the rooks, for instance, which crowd the same tree with their nests, and, rising by thousands into the air, fill it with their cries and darken it with their sable wings ; the cattle that roam pastures and prairie in countless herds ; those fishes that, moving in vast shoals, make the green sea glitter with their silver scales. These all seek companionship. God has endowed them with that instinct. Yet in their normal condition, and unless where their nature is modified by domestication, they show no sign, nor even seem to be capable, of friendship. So necessary, however, is it for the happiness of man and the complete development of his nature, that kings, who are often required by

policy to stand aloof on their cold, unenviable elevation from their highest nobles, have raised servants into favorites, and sought the pleasures of friendship in the confidence and company of menials. Soured, blighted, disappointed with the world, some make friends of domestic animals, and give to birds and dogs and cats the affections which belong to man ; and there is a touching story of a captive, cut off from human society and long immured in a lonely dungeon of the Bastille, whose heart, craving some object of friendship, found it in a spider he had tamed, and which his brutal jailer cruelly destroyed.

Besides gratifying one of the strongest instincts of humanity, friendship is recommended by its many advantages. These are equal to its pleasures. A friend, for example, can ask for us what modesty may hinder us from asking for ourselves. A friend can do justice to our merits, urge our claims, defend our character, and do a hundred things else for us it would not seem proper that we should do for ourselves. But perhaps one of the greatest advantages he enjoys who possesses a kind, honest, wise, discreet, faithful friend, lies in this, that amid difficulties he has a counsellor to advise, and against dangers a monitor to warn him. Happy those especially who have friends that will not see sin in them ; and, without being censorious, will tell them to their face what others say behind their back—point out their faults and failings, giving them occasion to say, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head." It is here, indeed, that

friendship is most commonly at fault. "Meddle not," says the wise man, "with him that flattereth;" but—and this brings out the value of a faithful friend—there is not in smooth and oily tongue any such flatterer as a man's own self. The difference, it has been well said, between the counsel a friend giveth and a man giveth himself being as great as between the counsel of a friend and the counsel of a flatterer. Hence the value of those who will give us good advice at the risk of giving us offence; and will rather forfeit our friendship than not attempt to save our interests and especially our souls. The warnings and counsels of such friends may wound our feelings; but so does the surgeon who inflicts pain to preserve life, and cuts that he may cure—"Faithful are the wounds of a friend."

2. In choosing friends, we should select such as promise, by the tone of their conversation, and by their moral and religious character, to prove friends indeed—such as we can trust in the hour of adversity, and would like to see by our dying-bed. Acquaintances are one thing, but friends another. Whoever, therefore, our acquaintances may be, we should, in the choice of friends, be guided by what determined David in the selection as well of his servants as of his associates—"I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me." The friendship of the world, as the Bible says, is enmity with God; and to its influence, to bad and dangerous associates, how many

promising youths, especially, owe their ruin--their chosen friends proving to be their worst foes! Better they took a serpent to their bosom than made a friend of the Sabbath-breaker, of the impure, of the scoffer, of the ungodly! Such companionship is more to be dreaded than the clutches of a drowning man. Choosing for his friends the friends of Jesus, "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise;" but not less true, and illustrated by the fate of thousands, who are drawn at first into sin and at last into perdition, the words that follow, "The companion of fools shall be destroyed."

3. We should seek a friend in Jesus Christ—the best, truest, kindest, surest friend man ever had. Everliving, everloving, and everlasting, there is no father like our Father who is in heaven; and as there is no fatherhood like God's, there is no friendship like Christ's—to be once named with His who, dying for us, the just for the unjust, laid down His life, not for friends, but enemies. Other friends change: not He. Of them we may, and often do, expect too much; nor will friendship be long maintained between us unless we lay our account with sooner or later discovering, and bearing with, their faults. But Jesus is faultless; altogether lovely—a friend on whose favor we cannot reckon, and from whose kindness we cannot expect, too much. With a wider and far deeper meaning than the world attaches to the expression, in Him we have "a friend at court;" whose intercessions for us, in contrast with those of Jonathan for David, are addressed to a gracious ear and a loving heart. In the presence of his Father and

mid the glories of the upper sanctuary, at the eternal source of all love and blessing and power, where pardons are granted to save, and grace is bestowed to sanctify, and angels wait to welcome, and mansions stand ready to receive us, He pleads our cause at God's right hand, omnipotent to save.

Like summer birds which come and go with the sun, like our shadow which deserts us when his face is clouded, like fair flowers that close their leaves as soon as rain begins to fall or cold winds to blow, earthly friends may desert us when we most need their sympathy and support—at the time, and in the circumstances, expressed in the well-known adage, "*A friend in need is a friend indeed.*" But such a friend is Jesus Christ. Sweetest when trials are bitterest, kindest when others are cruellest, nearest when danger is greatest, his character is delineated in the words, "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity;" and his image, though faintly, is beautifully shadowed forth in the mother who presses the tender infant closest to her bosom when storms beat and winds blow the coldest. In view of that dread hour when father, mother, husband, wife, children, acquaintances, wealth, and life itself, shall leave us, He says, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you: when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned: neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Nor shall they—his presence with us there working a greater wonder than on the day Israel passed dryshod through the sea, or the three Hebrew children breathed in a burn-

ing furnace, and walked unharmed on coals of fire.

One of the old Fathers tells a parable, which, with a slight alteration, illustrates this subject ; and, in view of an hour of death, and a day of judgment, may well recommend to our acceptance and confidence and peace and joy the friendship of the Friend of sinners. A man summoned to answer for his crimes, and called in question for his life, sought help of three friends he had. The first agreed to bear him company for a part of the way ; the second would lend him some money for his journey ; while the third undertook to go all the way with him, to appear in court, and plead his cause. So runs the story. In this man, the representative of a lost and guilty race, we see ourselves : and in the three friends whose help he sought, we see the flesh, or our fellow-creatures, the world with its wealth, and Christ, the sinner's Friend. And what can earthly friends, our dearest, do when death summons us to judgment, beyond accompanying us some way to the grave ? We part on its gloomy threshold ; further they cannot go. Nor can wealth and worldly goods help us to more than a winding sheet—the coffin that receives, and the tomb that closes on, our cold remains. But Jesus—the friend that sticketh closer than a brother—when heart and flesh faint and fail, shall be the strength of our heart, and our portion for evermore. He will never leave us. And when the gates of heaven have opened to receive us, and we have heard Him advocate our cause, and receive amid the loud plaudits of saints and angels, a verdict of acquittal, and in a blood-bought crown the reward

of faith, then shall we fully know that there is no friend like Him whom his enemies reproached, but his people love to think of, as the Friend of sinners. Happy for us if the coldness and alienation of old friends, whose countenance has changed, and by whose once oft-frequented doors we pass to sigh over the falsehood or frailty of earthly friendships, make us cling the closer to Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow—

“ Nor death nor life, nor earth nor hell,
Nor time's destroying sway,
Can e'er efface us from his heart,
Or make his love decay.

Each future period *that* will bless,
As it has bless'd the past ;
He loved us from the first of time,
He loves us to the last.”

David the Afflicted Man.

It is not uncommon to read in the preface to works which good men have left as legacies to the church, that their lives, passed amid quiet scenes and in the routine of useful but common duties, furnish few materials for biography. Their course in life less resembles a river that often swells into floods,—here leaps the foaming cataract, there thunders among the rocks through which it has cut itself a path, and only rests in great deep pools, to gather strength, as it were, for another rush,—than one which, while adorning the landscape and imparting verdure to the fields it flows through, steals along in silence to the sea. Such tranquillity and monotony were not features of David's life. It fills a much larger space in the Bible than any other—occupying as many as sixty-one chapters, though the history of Jacob is completed in eleven, and that of Abraham, the friend of God and father of the chosen race, in fourteen; and, as one might safely infer from that circumstance, it is full of interesting and important incidents. Indeed his history is one we should now-a-days call sensational; being crowded with events almost more strange and stirring than are usually represented on the stage, or woven into the pages of romance.

The curtain at its rising shows us a valley

among the quiet hills of Bethlehem, where a beautiful lad leads his snowy flock to the banks of a silent stream ; and sitting down on the sward beneath the shadow of a great rock, passes the time in meditation—now casting his thoughts into the form of poetry, and now pouring them forth in song to the music of his harp. A peaceful scene ! but how suddenly it changes ! A terrific roar, the flying sheep, and a cry of pain startle the shepherd. Bounding from the thicket, a lion has seized a lamb, and is bearing it off in its bloody jaws. The stripling leaps to his feet ; and dropping the harp for his staff, throws himself in the path of the spoiler. They close in deadly combat—a lad against a lion. Stunned by a shower of blows, the savage beast drops its prey to throw himself with a roar on his brave antagonist. With a brief prayer to God, he seizes the lion by the beard, and striking at the shaggy breast he offers, buries a knife in his heart ; lays him dead at his feet.

The next scene presents a change breaking, like the rosy dawn, on David's fortunes. Summoned from the flock, he returns to Bethlehem to find the whole town in a state of unusual excitement. Samuel, long the judge, and still the venerable prophet of Israel, has arrived there ; and its rulers, who furnish an illustration of the saying, "The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth," conscious of guilt, dread that he has come to call them to account. His business is not with them ; but with this youth, Jesse's youngest son. Hitherto known only by the maidens of an obscure hill town for the beauty of his person, and among its shepherd lads for his manly bravery, David is to be called to fill

the throne. Saul was the choice of the people, but he is the choice of God. Modestly he enters the great man's presence—wondering what he can have to do with him—and has no sooner appeared than the Lord says to Samuel, "This is he; arise, anoint him!"—and there, beside a smoking altar, agitated by the new and strange emotions the vision of a sceptre raises, David is kneeling at the prophet's feet, and in the oil poured on his golden locks receiving the investiture of a king.

The next view shows us the path to his brilliant fortunes beginning to open. A messenger appears in Bethlehem, summoning him from the sheepfolds to the palace. Since the day the Spirit of the Lord left the king to abide on David, a darkness, like what falls on the earth when the sun deserts the sky, had fallen on the mind of Saul; and now, harp in hand, the stripling stands before the throne and its moody, gloomy occupant, to charm his ear with music, and with its soft and gentle magic to conjure the fiend away. But as a boat, though now raised high on their foaming crest, is soon lost to view in the trough of the waves, David, apparently the sport of fickle fortune, disappears once more into the obscurity of country life. He leaves the royal presence—happy probably to exchange a courtier's for a shepherd's attire; and escape from the jealousies and contentions of a palace to his pipe and harp and simple home, to the little flock and quiet hills of Bethlehem.

Again the scene shifts. Now he stands on the pinnacle of his fame; the cynosure of all eyes; his name familiar as a household word; his story told by every hearth; the acknowledged saviour of his

country, and the burden of its songs ; the envy of her youths, and the admiration of her high-born and fairest maidens. Goliath has fallen to his sling ; the people go to gaze on the grim head that stands bleaching in the sun ; and the giant's sword is hung in the house of God—a trophy, not so much of David's powers, as that he who delivered him from the paw of the lion, and the paw of the bear, also delivered him from the hands of the Philistine.

But as the waves of a flowing tide, though it advances steadily on the naked sands as each curls and breaks, retreat back again into the bosom of the sea, so David's fortunes seemed to flow and ebb. The son-in-law of Saul, the beloved friend of Jonathan, the first man at court, the leader of the host, the idol of the people, he appears in the next scene flung as by a sudden change of fortune into the very dust. A price lies on his head ; an outlaw no man dares to shelter, and whose fallen fortunes none follow but a few retainers in circumstances almost as desperate as his own, he is hunted, like a wild beast, from cave to cave, and hill to hill.

Yet as when a storm with flashing lightnings, and peals that shake the heavens, and rains that swell the streams, disperses the loaded clouds and restores sunshine to the earth, events occur to produce a favorable change in David's circumstances. Fortune, as the world would say, smiles on him again. The fugitive of Engedi's caves, the exile his country had cast out to seek protection from its hereditary enemies, is called to the throne of Judah. A few years more, and every rival dead and gone, the sceptre of Israel falls into his hand ; and retaining it till his grasp relaxes in death, he

reigns sole monarch of a country among whose hills he had passed his youth as a shepherd, and in whose caves as a fugitive he had been often hiding for his life.

A strange, what a happy fortune ! I am not sure of that—a doubt that recalls a story illustrative of the happiness which may be enjoyed in humble life ; and also of the manner in which God sometimes, even in this world, crowns deeds of virtue, and makes the bread return which men in faith and kindness had cast on the waters. A century and more ago, a youth, impatient of control, left his native village and a widowed mother, who fell into sore poverty in the evening of her days. A humble neighbor, touched with pity, received her into his house ; shared with her the earnings of long hours and his busy shuttle ; assigned her the warmest corner at his fireside ; honored her as a mother ; nor ceased his kindness till he had laid her gray head in the grave. Long afterwards, a stranger, with furrowed brow and sun-browned face, appeared in the village. Having learned, in answer to his inquiries, the story of the widow and her benefactor, he repairs to the churchyard, and returns from her grave to seek the humble house in whose tenant she had found a son. The bread the cottager had cast on the waters returns in this stranger. He is the son who, long years ago, had left his mother to the care of others. Her benefactor had two children, just then blooming into womanhood. He adopts them ; and educating, endows them with the splendid fortune he had amassed in a distant land. One rose to be a countess, and, the object of a higher adoption, rose

to the rank of an heir of grace ; becoming as eminent for her piety in the church as for her position in the world. Yet, when raised to wealth and rank, she often said that these had never yielded such happiness as she enjoyed when, a sun-browned child, she herded her cattle on the lea, with larks singing above her head, and daisies springing at her naked feet. Similar, probably, was the experience of David.

“Covet the best gifts,” says the Apostle ; but let us not covet great earthly things, or turn an envious eye on their possessors, or forget in whatsoever state we are therewith to be content. The tops of the mountains are naked, and cold, and bare : the heights which ambition eyes and braces its limbs to climb, are often wrapt in clouds, chill with mists, white with snows, swept by storms and shattered by lightnings, from which the valleys lying at their feet are happily exempt. So David found to his painful experience. He reaches the throne ; but it is to recall with a melancholy pleasure the happy youth he spent under his father’s roof, and among the hills where, free from cares, he passed the live-long day with his harp and easy charge.

“At ease reclined beneath the verdant shade,
No more shall I behold my happy flock
Aloft hang browsing on the tufted rock.”

Taken from the sheepfolds to be a king, he bids farewell to ease, if not to peace of mind. His life gets crowded with events that tax his energies to the utmost—many, the result of his position, embittering with anxiety his days and nights ; and some that sprang from the temptations to which he was peculiarly exposed, striking his soul with horror

covering his head with the deepest shame. In defending or enlarging the borders of his kingdom, the sword is almost never out of his hand. He finds peace neither abroad nor at home. Domestic quarrels wreck his happiness ; treachery lurks within the walls of the palace ; crimes are committed in the very bosom of his family that shock the land ; acts where rebellion, rape, incest, adultery, and murder play their part, succeed each other on the stage—making his life, if one of the most interesting, the saddest recorded in the word of God. We have but to glance at the trials through which he passed to approve the title of this article, and understand the plaintive and dirge-like tones of many a psalm. Very different from that glorious scene where, under the eyes of the shouting host, he stands before Saul flushed with the excitement, and bearing in his hand the spoils of battle, one in reading these seems to see him in the solitude which sorrow courts ; alone ; an old and bowed-down man ; crushed beneath a load of grief ; the tears dropping from his cheeks as he bends over his harp with faltering voice, and hands that tremble as they touch the strings. No man, not Job himself, had more reason to cry, “O my God, my soul is cast down within me ; deep calleth unto deep at the voice of thy water-spouts ; all thy billows and thy waves are gone over me.” In some aspects explicable, in others inscrutably mysterious, there are scenes in this good man’s life which make one feel that he might have challenged the whole world, saying, “Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow !”

Let us consider David’s *afflictions*.

In the ills of poverty, the loss of children, the death of old friends, the numerous infirmities of age, troubles often gather around the prosperous in the decline of life, like clouds about a setting sun. Happy for them if these are sanctified: blessed by the Spirit of God to wean their affections from scenes they soon must leave, and prepare them, as trees which have the roots that bind them to earth loosened, for being transplanted to heaven! But unlike those who are long exempt from troubles, David and they were early acquaintances. Wherever there is sunshine there are shadows; and these fell coldly and early on his path. In consequence, probably, of his brothers having learned somewhat of the purpose of Samuel's visit, he became the object of their bitter envy; of such jealousy as cost Joseph his liberty, and almost his life. Called from the flock to carry provisions to his brethren, he goes down to the host, to find them, and all Israel, panic-stricken. No man will face the giant. He will. Though a stripling, his faith and courage rise to the occasion. He turns to this soldier and to that, asking, "What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?" and ever as the question is answered, his soul swells higher with a divine indignation, till under a power within that impels him to accept the challenge, he breaks out in this exclamation, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" And what encouragement does he get from his brothers? No thanks to them for that day's work! They eye him with jealousy. Eliab, the eldest of them,

wounds his feelings, and loads him with unmerited reproaches—"Why camest thou down hither?" he asks, "and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart!" Thus, like Joseph, and one greater still—like Jesus, he was wounded in the house of his friends.

This was but the beginning of David's sorrows. As the sun, on breaking through the haze to warm the air and shine in cloudless splendor, calls from their shades a swarm of insects, which pursue the traveller and pierce him with their stings, his prosperity exposed David to a host of evils. It awoke feelings in Saul's breast, not of envy only, but of the bitterest hatred. From the day that joyous mothers and maidens sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands," David was pursued with deadly animosity by him whose crown his valor had saved, and whose life he twice generously spared. The saviour of his country, no worse fate could have befallen its greatest enemy. He has to flee from the bosom of his family; he is driven from house and hold; dishonored as well as disgraced, his wife, the princess whom his courage won, is torn from his arms and given to another. Reduced to the most terrible straits, famine threatens him with death on this side, and the edge of the sword on that; than savage deserts and mountain caves, other home has he none, nor bed but the bare ground, nor associates but men in debt, discontented, and in distress—a base and lawless crew, from whose society, in other and happier circumstances, he had recoiled with disgust and horror.

The heathen said that a good man suffering ad-

versity well was a sight for the gods to look on. Such a sight is here. Some of his sweetest psalms, composed when he was hunted like a partridge on the mountains, remain to testify to the indomitable fortitude and heavenly composure which David maintained amid a sea of troubles. He suffered wrongs, nor sought to avenge them. He loved the country which had forsaken him ; nor, unlike most other outlaws, did he ever draw his sword but against its enemies. So hemmed in on all sides that, escape seeming as impossible as Saul remained implacable, he once despaired, and cried, "I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul ;" yet, when his courage twice placed his enemy in his power, twice he spared him. He put aside the spear that gleamed in the moonlight above the sleeping king, and which Abishai had raised to bury in his heart ; and when at length Saul left the gloomy hut of Endor, to meet his fate in battle, this generous man, burying his enemy's crimes and his own wrongs in one grave, lamented his fall, and avenged his death.

Yet those afflictions he suffered, and suffered for years, at the hand of Saul, and of others also, were but the big drops that precede the storm. When Saul slept in his bloody grave, and he himself had exchanged the caves of Engedi for a palace, and the hardships of an outlaw for the pomp and pleasures of a throne, it burst out on him in its wildest fury. To many a man his home offers a quiet retreat from the battle and struggles of life—he forgets them at evening in the bosom of his family. Alas for David ! his home was the scene of his most painful trials. Many foul crimes have defiled fair palaces, and murder has stained their floors with blood ;

but neither in robbers' den nor in the lowest haunts of vice have worse deeds been done than wrecked the peace of David. Within walls sacred to the domestic virtues, to pure love, and the tenderest affections, his daughter stands before him, dishonored and deflowered—her brother the author of this shocking crime. Who can fancy David's feelings when he looked on Tamar's tears, and listened, with grief and consternation on his countenance, to a story that filled the whole land with horror? But hardly has that earthquake-shock passed away when another follows. Tragedy on tragedy! The crime a father allowed to go unpunished her brother avenges. Biding his time, and, when suspicion is lulled, drawing Amnon, the perpetrator of that monstrous wickedness, into his toils, Absalom gives the signal, and, smitten by his servants, his brother dies. But ah! the sword that Absalom passed through Amnon's body pierced David's heart. Was ever father so afflicted? Alas the day! Wails fill the palace; and **there—a** sadder sight than Job sitting beggared and childless on the grave of all his children—he rends his garments; and, struck down by the blow, falls prostrate to the ground, his children standing around him dissolved in tears, and mingling their cries with his.

He has to drink still deeper "of the wine of astonishment." Hardly has time, the great healer, closed that wound, when Absalom, his favorite son, whom he had forgiven, inflicts a deeper one; commits a crime of yet darker dye. In reading how the Pope's soldiers, to obtain speedy possession of their jewels, were wont to sever the fingers

of Huguenot ladies from their bleeding hands, I have wondered at the savage cruelty ; but what cruelty, or crime, to be compared with his who, to possess himself the sooner of his father's crown, sought to sweep off his father's head ? But for that bloody purpose Absalom, plying every traitorous art, poisoned the ears, and stole away the hearts of the people ; seduced his father's soldiers and councillors from their allegiance ; and sowed the seeds of discontent broadcast throughout the land. Now deeming things ripe for revolt, he drops the mask, and breaks out into open and monstrous rebellion. What sins too great for the man to commit whom God abandons, and the devil drives ? Lost to shame, he publicly dishonors his father's bed ; and has rewards for the assassin who will bring his gory gray head and lay it at his feet. We have seen many a sad sight ; but none to be compared to this aged monarch, full of honors and of years, worthy of all filial love and public veneration, who had no subject but should have fought, nor child but should have died for him, flying with a few followers, under the cloud of night, to escape the sword of his own son. And when tidings came of Absalom's death, how terrible his grief ! He wrings his hands, and, as he goes up to his chamber, ever and anon stops to raise his swimming eyes in mute appeal to heaven for pity, or give vent to the love and unutterable anguish of his broken heart, crying, " O, my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee ! O Absalom, my son, my son ! "

The *cause* of his afflictions.

Our springs and streams rise in wet, and fall in

dry weather. They are formed, and fed by rain; and thus when the river, on some day of unclouded sunshine, suddenly rises and swells till it roars in red flood "between bank and brae," we conclude that the mountains from which it descends have been bellowing with thunder, and deluged with showers of rain. Nor to any other cause than rainfall do we attribute the springs and streams of those regions where, as in Egypt, for instance, snow never falls, nor even rain, for a long course of years. Though the source of the Nile, and of those annual inundations to which Egypt, once the granary of Rome, owes its remarkable fertility, was long enveloped in the profoundest mystery, it was never doubted that the cradle of that ancient river lay in some mountain region on which the loaded air discharged enormous quantities of snow or rain. Now as rain, however remote the place where it falls from the river where it flows, or the fountain where it springs, is the source of their waters, so, directly or indirectly, through an immediate or remote connection, all sorrow has its source in sin—"no sin no sorrow" is as true an adage as "no cross no crown."

The song of every bird, the happy gambols of every lambkin, the merry mazy dance of insects in the warm air of a summer evening, present God to us in an aspect of divine benignity—as taking pleasure in all his works; and, careful for the enjoyment of his meanest creatures, as filling their hearts with gladness. No heretics are further from the truth than those who regard the Divine Being as indifferent to the happiness of his creatures; or as capable of doing what no kind, no just, no upright judge

would do—of punishing innocence, or laying afflictions on any one without cause. It is a canon of our courts of justice that it is better that nine guilty men should escape than that one innocent man should suffer ; and, as the spectre asked of Eliphaz, “Shall a mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?” He has no pleasure in the death of him that dieth. And so far from regarding Him as, to use the words of the parable, “an austere man who taketh up what he laid not down, and reapeth what he did not sow,” I believe that man to be in some respects most like God whose greatest happiness is to make others happy. How can I believe else of Him who so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life?

It is, I say, in no case God, but sin which is the source and cause of evil. This is the bitter fountain from which, directly or remotely, all sorrows flow ; and the simple reason why there is no sorrow in heaven, is that there is no sin there. But while this is true, and the Fall, the sin of man in Eden, is the only key that opens to any extent whatever the mystery of world-wide suffering, men suffer many afflictions which cannot be traced directly and immediately to their sins. It is always well when we are afflicted to inquire whether there is any cause for the Lord having a controversy with us ; at the same time Jesus warns us against the error of referring every special suffering to some special sin. This were, like Job’s friends, to persecute him whom God has smitten, and talk to the grief of those whom He has wounded. “Think ye,” said our blessed

Lord, "that those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Meanwhile, the tares grow with the wheat, and not seldom grow the taller of the two; meanwhile, the goats go with the sheep, and climbing, according to their natural instincts, heights the others never reach, form often the most conspicuous part of the **flock**. It were a great mistake to suppose that the dispensations of Providence afford any infallible criterion by which to judge of our relationship, as friends or foes, to God—"Many are the afflictions of the righteous"—"Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that He receiveth." Blessed balm this to bleeding hearts; a truth graphically set forth in that story where piety, clad in rags, sits begging at the gate, while sin is clothed in purple and fine linen, and fares sumptuously every day!

Still—and let it be a warning both to saints and sinners—it often happens in the providence of God, and no doubt through divine intention, that men's sins find them out. Justified through faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, his people are forgiven the iniquity of their sin; yet they are made to smart for it. Their sin produces suffering, and the suffering reminds them of their sin—the connection between the two being not remote but direct,—manifest as that between drunkenness and rags; between theft and a prison; between debauchery and an impaired constitution; between a woman's fall from the paths of virtue and her loss of place, and character, and honest bread.

In this light David presents one of the most remarkable beacons ever set up to warn the unwary ; and teach him " that thinketh he standeth to take heed lest he fall." Was his house rent asunder by domestic quarrels ? Was it the scene of crimes such as have seldom broken a father's heart, or stained the purity and wrecked the peace of families ? It may seem a great mystery to some how so good a man should have been so sorely tried. But it is no mystery. He reaped as he had sowed. If a second wife and a second family often breed discord among ourselves, with a plurality of wives—numbering at least seven or eight—David had nothing else than dispeace to look for. His domestic troubles were the price he paid for the pleasures of polygamy—for disregarding the ancient law of Eden, and indulging in a practice which has proved the curse of every country where it prevailed. The offspring of different mothers, and inflamed by their jealousies, envyings, rivalries, and other bad passions, his children neither did, nor could regard each other with the affection to which we owe the peace and purity of our Christian homes. Hence the troubles that distracted, and the crimes that disgraced his house. In these his sin found him out.

This retribution was still more painfully, and not less plainly exemplified in the unnatural and monstrous rebellion of Absalom. It may be traced to his sin in the matter of Bathsheba. In that crime he sowed the wind, in this rebellion he reaps the whirlwind—the death of the child, the fruit of their guilty love, being but the beginning, and the least, of all the sorrows of which his adultery was the fatal source. Bathsheba may not be known to

many but as the wife of Uriah—that gallant soldier whose fate is so pitiful, and whose murder, planned with the coolest deliberation, and accomplished by the basest treachery, is David's blackest crime ; one that constrains us to exclaim, " Lord, what is man ? " " Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils : for wherein is he to be accounted of ? " But on examining the Scriptures we find something more about this woman of fatal beauty and too easy virtue—whose simplest effort to fly, Joseph-like, from temptation might have recalled the king to his senses and his saintship ; saving both from a load of guilt, and a sea of troubles.

It appears from one genealogy that Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam, and from another that her father Eliam was the son of Ahithophel, the Gilonite, David's counsellor. This near relationship between Bathsheba and Ahithophel throws a flood of light on Absalom's rebellion ; for what more likely than that through means of that, Ahithophel sought vengeance for the wrongs which, in the double crime of adultery and murder, the king had committed against him and his house ? Revenge is a strong passion in all, but especially in the bosom of eastern nations. There, concealed under smiling and specious appearances, it will lie burning for long years—like the fires of a volcano under the purple vineyards, and fair flowers, and umbrageous forests that clothe the mountain's side. Ahithophel's vindictive passions found their tool in Absalom ; and their time when, like the pent-up fires of a volcano, the rebellion burst out. He lent it those extraordinary talents which constituted him David's ablest statesman, and led men to say

that "the counsel of Ahithophel was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God." With a devilish craft, for the purpose of making reconciliation between the father and son impossible, he counselled the shameless outrage that Absalom perpetrated on the royal concubines. The immediate pursuit, which would have crowned the revolt with success, was also his sagacious but bloodthirsty advice. He it was who fanned the flames of ambition in Absalom's bosom; he steeled his heart against the relentings which would otherwise have stayed his hand. In this man, whom he had deeply wronged, David saw the head, and front, and mainspring of the conspiracy. Thus God reminded him of his crimes, and showed him his sin in its punishment. His case presents a remarkable example of how long sin, so far as its effects are concerned, may slumber ere it breaks out—like a fire that, smouldering days and nights in some beam, at length bursts into flame, and reduces the fairest pile to a blackened ruin and a heap of smoking ashes.

If, like David, we are compelled to trace our sufferings to our sins, what a weight does that add to the load! Let us pray God, that, while He forgives their iniquity for Christ's sake, and takes away their guilt through his blood, he would not visit us for our sins. If we are to suffer, may it not be for sins, but for righteousness' sake! A light load that—a fortune we should neither greatly dread nor deprecate. In words illustrated by those heroic spectacles of martyrdom where the saints praised God in prisons, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, embraced the stake, and stretched

out their hands with good, brave old Latimer to bathe them in its rising flames, Jesus says, "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil falsely against you for my sake ; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

The *use and profit* of his afflictions.

When Queen Mary, by her marriage, was about to plunge herself and the kingdom of Scotland into dark and bloody trouble, Knox publicly condemned the step. For this she summoned the bold Reformer to her presence, complained bitterly of his conduct, and saying, "I vow to God I shall be revenged," burst into a flood of tears. Waiting till she had composed herself, he proceeded calmly to make his defence. It was triumphant ; but produced no other effect on Mary than to exasperate her passions. Again she began to sob, and weep with great bitterness. While Erskine, the friend of both, and a man of mild and gentle spirit, tried to mitigate her grief and resentment by praising her beauty and accomplishments, Knox continued silent—waiting with unaltered countenance till the queen had given vent to her feelings. Then explaining how he was constrained to sustain her tears rather than hurt his conscience and by his silence betray the commonwealth, he protested that he never took delight in the distress of any creature ; and that so far from rejoicing in her majesty's tears, it was with great difficulty he could see his own boys weep when he corrected them for their faults.

In this beautiful expression we see the feelings of every father ; and in these a faithful, though feeble,

reflection of the kind heart of God. In no case does He afflict his people willingly ; and always for their good.

“We have had fathers of our flesh,” says an apostle, “which corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of our spirits, and live ? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” A glorious object ; and what precious consolation to his people—to them we may address the words of the prophet : “O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted !” Why not comforted ? God beats his people, but it is to make them better ; nor when blow follows on the back of blow, are their trials other than the strokes of the flail on a threshing-floor—it falls not to bruise the grain, but to separate the chaff from the wheat. Deep no doubt were the sorrows that wounded, the anguish that tore David’s heart—“I am poor and needy,” he cries ; “my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declineth. My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit ; in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Lord, why castest thou off my soul ? Why hidest thou thy face from me ? I am afflicted, and ready to die.” Yet in all this, in David’s as in every such case, God afflicted not willingly.

And how his gracious purpose was accomplished in the Psalmist’s afflictions, may be seen, for instance, in the sorrow, and even horror, with which

he regarded his saddest fall. His bitterest enemies could not have exposed, nor his dearest friends lamented, it more than he did himself. Never man was less like those whom a prophet addresses, saying: "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted!" He was not stout-hearted. He lies prostrate in the dust, both before God and man—concealing nothing; offering no excuse, or palliation; his grief, as expressed in the 51st Psalm, not grief but agony. If for a time his heart seemed a flinty rock, struck by a power mightier than the rod of Moses, it pours forth a torrent of tears, and prayers, and the deepest sorrow. "Have mercy upon me, O God," he cries, "according to thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation!"

Affliction proved, in his case, as in many others, the greatest preacher. Brought through it and the grace of God to a deep sense of the insufficiency of the world, and of the evil of sin, led thereby to earnest prayer, with strong crying and tears, for pardon, no wonder he said, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." But his afflictions have been good also for the Church. She owes not a few of his most prized and precious psalms to the afflictions that brought out the noblest features of his character, as the darkness of night does the stars, the crushing of some flowers their latent odors, and fire the shining metal which lies concealed in

the earthy ore. We had been great losers if David had not been greatly afflicted. In these psalms he points us to our refuge in times of trouble ; and furnishes us with language to express the wishes and relieve the burden of our hearts. So long as men have wounds to heal, and war with sin to wage, and faults to confess, and forgiveness to seek, and trials to endure, and death to face, so long will his words ascend to the ear of God, from spiritual battle-fields and domestic altars, from praying-closets and beds of death.

The greatest of all afflictions, as has been justly said, is an unblessec affliction. On the other hand, let the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer, turn them into the means of our sanctification, and there are no greater mercies. How many, when they became poor in this world, have grown rich toward God ! How many have found life in the death of dear ones ! How many, by being brought to weep over a broken cistern, have turned their trembling steps to the fountain of living water ! and when God sent storms to wreck their earthly happiness, how many "on the broken pieces of the ship" have reached the shore in safety ! No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous ; yet let us not shrink from its pain, since our blessed Lord makes use of it to work out the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The harrow that tears up the bosom of the soil, laying it open to heavenly influences, to the showers and sunshine of the sky, brings joy in harvest. So shall it be with afflictions. Bitter frosts, by means of which God kills the weeds our hearts are so ready to throw up—thorns he lays on our pillow to prevent us spending our

lives in sleep—sharp spurs, without whose touch most would make slow progress in the way to heaven ;—afflictions are of the greatest advantage to God's people. They teach us the vanity of the world ; they call us to our senses ; they remind us of our sins ; they give depth to repentance ; they give fervor to love ; they give wings to prayer ; and they quicken our longings, and, with them, our preparation for that happy world, where there is no death, nor sickness, nor sin, nor sorrow, and Jesus wipes away all tears from all eyes.

Solomon the Wise Man.

PART I.

LET us ascend the stream of time, and transport ourselves to Jerusalem some three thousand years ago. Its most characteristic features now are mean and ignoble buildings ; silent streets ; signs of decay and oppression and squalid poverty ; and a miserable remnant of its ancient race, haunting its walls like ghosts, and filling the air with their plaintive wails. Unlike Rome, or Athens, or Thebes, Jerusalem hardly retains, even in its ruins, a vestige of departed glory. But at the date I speak of, it was a picturesque and magnificent city. The mountains around it were clothed with gardens, and cornfields, and fat olive-groves, and terraced vineyards, and clumps of feathery palms ; its streets were the abodes of luxury and ease, or filled with the hum of business and crowds of traffickers, who brought to its markets the varied products of distant climes—Egypt's finest fabrics and India's costliest wares ; and with the royal palace—a building at once of great magnificence and prodigious strength—crowning the heights of Zion, and looking over the city, with its sparkling fountains, and gardens, and net work of streets, and stately edifices, to Moriah, where the temple rose,

dazzling the eye, and glittering, as the smoke of early sacrifice ascended in the calm blue air, with gold in the beams of the morning sun ; city of the living God, Jerusalem was then, as the Jews proudly called it, the "perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth."

Having transported ourselves there, we mingle with a crowd that waits before the palace. Its gates at length are thrown open ; the throng divides like a parted wave, making way for a stately chariot which advances, drawn by splendid horses, carpeted with the costliest tapestry of the loom, and bedecked with silver and gold and purple. Around it is a bodyguard of chosen men, the tallest and bravest of the land : each arrayed in purple, with his long black locks sprinkled with gold dust ; in his hand a drawn sword, and on his left arm a golden shield. A proud array ! and in the centre of it, seated in his chariot, is the object the people crowd and push and stand on tiptoe to see—the cynosure of all eyes. His raiment is white as snow : health blooms on his ruddy cheek : adown his broad shoulders fall bushy locks, dark as the raven's wing ; with features cast in the finest mould, eyes of the brightest blue, intellect beaming in his look, grace and fascination in all his bearing, he sits there a king of men, "every inch a king"—to copy the description of the sacred writers, his lips were full of grace ; his countenance was as Lebanon ; his soul was anointed with the oil of gladness ; without a peer or rival, he was fairer than the sons of men. Followed by a splendid retinue, and attended by kings, who had come in regal pomp and with costly gifts "to hear the

wisdom that God had put into his heart," this was Solomon. Thus, like a comet sweeping through the sky with its long train of brilliant light, Solomon, as we gather from Josephus, as well as from the sacred records, was wont to appear in public ; thus he went to dispense justice in the hall of judgment, or pass his leisure with a train of female beauties in his enchanting garden at Etham—his paradise, as it was called.

Of all the kings of the earth, none during his life ever attracted so much notice as Solomon, or left behind him at his death such a wide-spread and immortal memory. Not the queen of Sheba only, who, on hearing "of his fame concerning the name of the Lord, came to prove him with hard-questions," but many others, to whose kingdoms his fame had reached, repaired to Jerusalem—curious as Moses when, amazed to see a bush burning without being consumed, he said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight." The splendor of his reign, like all earthly greatness, has passed away as a theatrical pageant from the stage. Its very theatre, indeed, is now a melancholy ruin. The plowshare of war has gone over Jerusalem, nor left any traces of the glory it enjoyed under Solomon but a few great stones, where the dispersed of Israel, aliens in their fatherland, weep as mourners at the graves and by the monuments of the dead. Not only so ; but our Lord, taking away that glare about the state of kings and pomp of wealth that is so dazzling to the weak eyes of mortals, has given us the true measure of Solomon's glory. A flower of the meadow his text, and his sermon the shortest but most impressive eve

preached on the verdict, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity," Jesus said to his disciples, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

That is true ; and three thousand years have passed since he died—sweeping millions into oblivion, obliterating the footprints of kings and conquerors, and crumbling their proudest tombstones into dust. Yet the fame of Solomon survives. He still lives in many an eastern story ; and where dusky forms beneath a sky sparkling with stars, sit round the lonely tent fire, they while away the night with strange legends of his wisdom, and glory, and greatness.

Those who are conversant with the literature of Persia tell us that he is one of its most frequent and famous characters. It records nothing of David, but countless stories of his son : one, called the "Saluman-Nameh," occupies no fewer than eighty books. The Persians also show a tomb at Shiraz, which they pretend to be Bathsheba's ; and not to any of their own kings, but to Solomon belongs the honor, according to the common legend, of having built the once magnificent city of Persepolis.

A more important place still belongs to Solomon in the hoary traditions of that country, amid whose mountain fastnesses our army, by endurance, valor in the fight, and clemency in the victory, lately crowned itself anew with laurels. Abyssinia claims him as the founder of its imperial dynasty ! and in Theodore holding the pass single handed, deserted

of all but his own lion-like courage, fell, according to the traditions of the country, a descendant of Solomon and the queen of Sheba. The story goes that she bore a son to him, and took the boy with her to her own country, where he lived to become the ancestor of a long line of kings ; and that from the thousands of Hebrews who accompanied her on her return, sprung the large body of Jews who are now found in Abyssinia, and whose conversion to Christianity was the object of that enterprise of Stern, the missionary, which formed one at least of the causes of the late Abyssinian war. As many cities contended for the honor of being the birth-place of Homer, other countries besides Abyssinia—Arabia, for instance—have claimed the queen of Sheba for their sovereign, and Solomon for the father of their kings.

Nor has his name been preserved only in the historic legends and oral traditions of those countries, like Arabia, Persia, and Ethiopia, that bordered on his own dominions, or were allied to him by some closer connection. The remotest corners of Europe had legends of Solomon ; and equally among Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan nations his name forms a nucleus around which have gathered the strangest and most fantastic fables. No man ever left so broad and deep a mark on the world as the subject of this chapter. The Peak of Teneriffe stands 14,000 feet above the level of the sea ; and sailors tell us at what an enormous distance it is descried, and over how many leagues of ocean, with its feet below the waves and its head above the clouds, it flings its long shadow. Such a place Solomon filled in the world. Those who never heard of Cyrus, or

Alexander, or the Cæsars, have heard of him. His name belongs to more tongues, and his shadow has fallen farther, and over a larger surface of the earth, than any other man's.

And to what is this mainly due ?

—He was, no doubt, a great monarch, in the ordinary acceptation of the term—among the greatest that ever filled a throne. Other empires have embraced a larger surface of the earth than his ; yet, the fruit not of his own wars but of his father's, his dominions were of vast extent. They reached from Egypt, and the borders of the Philistines, eastward to the Euphrates, and southward as far as the head of the Red Sea. The most powerful of the existing dynasties were his allies—the Pharaohs who occupied the old throne of Egypt, and also the sovereigns of that enterprising Phenician race, whose ships braved the dangers of unknown seas ; whose merchants, like our own, were princes, and whose traffickers were the honorable of the earth. Under the lofty dome of St. Paul's we read these words of its architect : “ If you seek my monument, look around ; ” and in Jerusalem Solomon had such a monument of his greatness. It was said of Augustus Cæsar, that he found Rome brick, and made it marble ; but Jerusalem—and the country as well as its capital—owed still more to the enterprise and vigor of Solomon. He threw a wall around it of prodigious height and strength ; and the city that wall defended he adorned with the most magnificent edifices. He built a palace for himself of such splendor and dimensions that, though he had thousands of workmen, in the Canaanites whom he pressed into his service, it took thirteen years to

construct. He built a second palace, which formed the hall of judgment, and was called, probably from the enormous quantity of cedar used in its construction, the House of the Forest of Lebanon; and another still for Pharaoh's daughter, her, the chief of his too numerous wives, whom he married on succeeding to the throne. Besides these, after designs and with treasures left by his father David—who, because he was a man of blood, one whose life, in other words, had been spent in wars, was denied the privilege of raising a house to the God of peace—he built the Temple. That sacred edifice, which he began in the fourth, and finished in the eleventh year of his reign, was of unrivalled splendor; for its size the costliest which wealth and piety ever raised to the worship of God. It is calculated that the talents of gold and of silver which are recorded as having been left by David for this purpose were equal in value to the eight hundred millions that form the national debt of our country. No wonder that a building on which such treasures were lavished should have excited more of the world's attention than all the temples of India or Egypt, of Greece or Rome; cast a flood of glory on the reign of Solomon; and is recalled to this day by Jews in every quarter of the world with mingled feelings of pride and sorrow.

Nor was it only palaces, or even cities—such as Tadmor in the desert, afterwards called Palmyra, whose lonely and beautiful ruins still attract the steps and excite the admiration of travellers—that Solomon built. In alliance with Hiram, king of Tyre, the capital of Phenicia, he built ships; com-

binning the merchant with the prince. With the exception of the "glorious gospel of the blessed God," commerce has done more to preserve the peace of the world, and promote the civilization and happiness of its inhabitants, than any other influence whatever. Though some affect to despise it, there is no pursuit more honorable; and deeming it worthy not of nobles only but of kings, Solomon built mercantile navies at Elath and also at Eziongeber. These were ports on the coast of Edom, a country subdued by his father's arms and the power of prayers like these—"Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom? Wilt not thou, O God, go forth with our hosts? through God we shall do valiantly; for he it is that shall tread down our enemies."

From these harbors, lying on the Atlantic Gulf of the Red Sea, Solomon's ships sailed to the coasts of Arabia, India, Ceylon, returning with rich freights—gold and silver and precious stones; nard, aloes, sandal-wood, and ivory; apes and peacocks. Nor did his greatness appear only in naval enterprises conducted in that quarter of the world. He launched his vessels on the waters of the Mediterranean. His and Hiram's ships made voyages to Tarshish, a region lying somewhere on the coasts of Spain; and farther still. Bold sailors, the Phenicians pushed their way through the Gates of Hercules, as the Straits of Gibraltar were then called. Braving the terrors of the Atlantic, they steered for the south-west extremity of our own island, which was regarded by them as a group of islands, and called the Isles of the Cassirides. They came to Cornwall for tin—the metal which com-

bined with copper formed the bronze so largely used by the ancients both for armor and domestic purposes, and so often mentioned in their writings, both sacred and profane, under the name of brass. This composite metal entered largely into the furniture of the Jewish temple ; and while there was thus a very old and interesting connection between our own country and the land of God's chosen people, to me it imparted additional interest to the bold headlands and picturesque bays of Cornwall, to think that its hills and streams supplied materials for the house of God, and that Solomon's ships ploughed the very sea that swelled and broke in foaming rollers at our feet.

In this commerce which Solomon carried on we have one of the sources of the enormous wealth which contributed materially to his fame, and led to the saying that "King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches." But he had other, and no less productive, sources of revenue : First, for instance, the tax he raised on the products of the East, as they passed, which they required to do, through his territories—one caravan travelling by Edom to Egypt, the other by Tadmor in the desert to Asia Minor and Europe ; secondly, the tribute paid by princes, who held their provinces at his pleasure, or by independent sovereigns, who purchased his countenance and alliance with costly gifts—"all the kings of the earth," it is said, "sought the presence of Solomon, and they brought every man his present, vessels of silver and vessels of gold and raiment, harness and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year ;" and thirdly, the taxes he imposed on the property and commerce of his subjects and

how heavy these became, at least in the latter years of his reign, may be inferred from the circumstance that they bred rebellion, and were the chief causes of the revolt that rent the kingdom asunder in the days of his son Rehoboam. Besides all these sources of revenue, Solomon succeeded to enormous treasures, over and above those expended on the Temple ; the fruits and spoils of his father's wars. Josephus tells us that wealth of incredible value was stored up in David's sepulchre ; where, since it was neither exhausted by the lavish expenditure of his son nor by the plundering hand of Hyrcanus, who, according to that historian, robbed it of three thousand talents of gold, it may yet be found—if any are so fortunate as to discover what has been often sought, but always in vain, the dust and tomb of David.

It is impossible now to form a correct estimate of the wealth of Solomon ; but certain details which are recorded in Scripture, and recall the fabulous magnificence of Mexican and Peruvian kings, help us to fancy how great it was, and how fully God made good his promise, that since Solomon had asked neither wealth, nor long life, nor conquest over his enemies, but wisdom, He would give him that and these besides. Take these as examples. The walls, the doors, the very floor of the Temple, were plated with gold, furnishing gorgeous imagery for John's description of heaven. It appeared everywhere else in munificent profusion. Two hundred targets and three hundred shields of beaten gold blazed on the arms of the stately guard that lined the way when Solomon repaired to the Temple, or to the House of the Forest. His throne, constructed

of ivory, was overlaid with plates of pure gold, and were the steps that ascended it. Throwing into shade and meanness the proudest displays of modern palaces on high days of festival,—“all the drinking vessels of Solomon were of gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest were of pure gold—none were of silver ;” as to it, it was so common in his days that “it was nothing accounted of,” says the sacred writer—“the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones.” To hear some pale preacher, whom his people leave to struggle with straitened circumstances, depreciating what he never possessed, discoursing with touching eloquence on the worthlessness of wealth, and how unfit riches are to satisfy either the aspirations of an immortal or allay the terrors of a guilty soul, may not impress us ; but, in taking leave of Solomon’s greatness and wealth, let me observe that here is a scene which should. What more striking than the spectacle of this royal preacher, rising up amid scenes of the most imposing grandeur, surrounded by everything the world desires, and pronouncing over them all this sweeping, this solemn, this mournful verdict : “Vanity, vanity, and vexation of spirit !” How should that lead us to set our affections on things above, and lend our ears to another voice—to Him, the Amen, the Faithful and the True Witness, who, freely offering pardon, and peace through his own precious blood, addresses us, saying, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich !”

Surpassing all the kings of the earth in riches, it was not these which made Solomon famous. “A man shall be commended,” says the proverb,

“according to his wisdom ;” and his own fame presents the best possible illustration of that, his own proverb. Cabinets of natural history possess specimens of insects that lived, probably, ages before the creation of man ; and there I have seen them, inside a piece of transparent, fragrant, golden amber, as perfect in every limb, feeler, silken wing, and member of their delicate forms, as on the day they died. The amber in which Solomon’s memory has been embalmed was his unrivalled wisdom. It is for that he is remembered, and his name preserved in the many thousand eastern legends that history has written and oral tradition tells concerning him.

It may interest, if not instruct, my readers to have some specimens of these. Here is a sample of the sack. He could interpret the speech of beasts and birds ; and was acquainted with the hidden virtues of gems and herbs. He knew spells to cast out demons, and charms to cure disease—and some of these, attributed to Solomon, are used to this day in the East. He was possessed of a ring which revealed to him the past, the present, and the future ; and when this was stolen by Ash-medai, the king of the demons, he fell, it is said, into great sorrow, and wandered throughout all the land of Israel, weeping and crying, “I, the preacher, was the King of Jerusalem.” He was acquainted with the arts of magic ; and by these obtained such power over evil spirits that they became his slaves, and transported from India, among other and more important services, those rare trees that adorned his famous garden at Etham. He built the splendid city of Persepolis by the aid of certain demons,

called Jinns ; while he conquered another and rebellious class, named Afreets, after a long struggle, and imprisoned them in the depths and dark caves of the sea.

Other legends, like the Bible story of the two women who disputed for possession of the living child, present illustrations of his sagacity ; of the promptitude and profundity of his wisdom—how it stood every test, and triumphed in every trial. On one occasion, for example, a band of fair boys and stout girls, of one size and age, and all dressed alike, were brought to him ; and, to test his skill, he was required to say which were boys and which girls. He broke in a moment through the maze. Ordering water to be brought, he directed them all to wash ; and observing, as they washed, how one class vigorously scrubbed, while another, careful of their beauty, but gently stroked their faces with the water, he solved the enigma—unhesitatingly and instantly pronouncing the first to be boys, and the second girls. On another occasion, one who came, like the Queen of Sheba, to prove his wisdom as well as to see his glory, brought some flowers, requiring him to say whether they were real or artificial. If they were works of art, the imitation of tint, of size, of color, and of form, was so perfect as to deceive the sight, and defy all ordinary means of detection. But no art could baffle Solomon's sagacity. It suggests an unerring test. He desires the flowers to be placed on the ground. The air is filled with the hum of bees as they flit in search of honey from flower to flower. He watches the course of one as it approaches the flowers that were to put his wisdom to the proof

It brushes their leaves, but passes by on careless wing, nor stays its flight for a moment to hover over them. Satisfied with this test, he pronounces them false ; leaving the maker of the flowers and the spectators of the trial, in their ignorance of his shrewd, though simple, test, amazed at his sagacity.

Such, as we find them in the traditions, oral or written, of the East, are the many thousand legends of which the subject of this chapter is the hero ; and it will be observed that wild, extravagant, and even ridiculous as some of them appear, they all turn on his wisdom. His wisdom is the foundation on which the superstructure stands, however puerile and fantastic it may be ; and this, I may remark, presents a phase of human nature which is creditable to it, and sheds some faint rays of glory on the ruins of our humanity. Though fallen, men are not fallen so low as in their calm and unbiased judgment to esteem the possession of wealth above that of wisdom ; or think that riches gives any one a title to their respect while he lives, or to their remembrance when he dies. While mere wealth wins no respect for its possessor, and leaves his memory to rot and sink into the oblivion of the grave, Solomon's wisdom survives in these legends, and bearing his name over all the East, has floated it down to successive generations. There was no ground therefore for his gloomy forebodings, his complaint, " As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even unto me ; and why was I then more wise, seeing that which now is in the days to come shall all be forgotten ?" This wisest man, as well as greatest enigma in history ; this weakest of mor-

als, who yet filled the world with his fame ; this type of Jesus Christ—the peace, and riches, and glory of whose kingdom were symbolized by his—who yet in the matter of his salvation offers doubts divines have never solved, is not forgotten. His fame remains forever embalmed in the memory of his unrivalled wisdom. That we shall discuss in our next chapter ; only observing, meanwhile, that his strange and inconsistent conduct, the gross sensuality that stained his life, and the dark cloud that in consequence hangs above his tomb, are singularly instructive. It is natural for us to regard with respect great intellect and practical wisdom ; penetrating sagacity and boundless stores of knowledge ; all those mental qualities which command admiration, and secure a place for their possessor in the temple of fame. Yet how does Solomon's history teach us that the wisdom which maketh wise to salvation and to win souls to Christ, that the wisdom which esteems the knowledge of God himself of greater value than the profoundest knowledge of his works, that the wisdom which in many an unlettered peasant has aspired to this blessed and lofty attainment, " Acquaint thyself with God and be at peace," is that of which it can be most justly and emphatically said, " With all thy getting, get wisdom—the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." What shall it profit a man though he were as wise as Solomon, and rich as Cræsus, though he should gain the whole world, if he lose his soul ?

Solomon the Wise Man.

PART II.

WISER than him who said, "Experience teaches fools"—a lying proverb, that has got, like bad money, into circulation—Solomon says, "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." To their own loss, and that also of others, who have the misfortune to be connected with them, such persons go blundering, stumbling, floundering on through life, being, to use a common expression, no sooner out of one scrape than they fall into another. Yet there is a case more hopeless than theirs. "Seest thou a man," says Solomon, "wise in his own conceit?—there is more hope of a fool than of him."

The converse of this is equally true; all experience proving what youth especially should give heed to, that modesty is the sure pathway to merit, and humility the foundation of all true greatness. Access to other kingdoms besides heaven is not to be obtained but according to the beautiful lesson our Lord taught wrathful and wrangling disciples. To abash their self-conceit and rebuke their vanity, He called a little child, and setting the gentle, modest, blushing boy in the midst of

them, he pointed to him, saying, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven : whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." The tallest trees spring from the deepest roots : the lark rises from her lowly nest among the dewy grass to sing and soar the highest of the feathered choristers : and like these in many instances the humblest have attained to the highest greatness. Of this Solomon presents one of the most illustrious examples. Endowed with the wisdom that has made his name so famous, he presented a living commentary on the words—"God exalteth the humble."

Happy the country where the sovereign sets an example of piety, and throws the weight of the crown into the scale of virtue and religion. Nor in this respect, though the day sadly belied the bright promises of the morning, did Solomon fail to set an example to kings. He preferred God's honor to his own—building the Temple first, and his own palace afterwards. Again, we find him, very soon after his accession to the kingdom, leaving Jerusalem with all its attractions, to repair to the house of God in Gibeon ; and stand—an impressive spectacle—before the majesty of heaven as a worshipper and a sinner, on a level with the meanest of his subjects. There, teaching the needful, but oft-neglected lesson, that as our mountain lakes discharge at their outlet as much water as they receive from their parent streams, we also should give as we get, Solomon presented offerings corresponding to his position and his wealth—and also,

perhaps, to the feeling Alexander, the Czar of all the Russias, expressed on his death-bed, when, being at the point of death, he was heard to say, "Kings have much need of mercy." A thousand animals, Solomon's gift, bled in sacrifice at Gibeon—a thousand victims, a burnt-offering for his sins, were consumed to ashes on its altar.

There is no money some give so grudgingly, yet none which he who offers with a willing mind lays out at such interest, as what is bestowed on God's cause and spent in his service. What security, bond, or bill like the word of God? "Honor the Lord with thy substance," like the fifth, is a commandment with promise. "Them that honor me," He has said, "I will honor;" nor, though the bread we cast on the waters usually takes much longer time to return, did four-and-twenty hours elapse till God redeemed that pledge to Solomon.

The king has gone to rest. Wearied and worn out, probably, with the duties of a day memorable for the costliest sacrifice ever offered on an altar, he slept; and, sleeping, dreamed. God, who in former and also in future ages made himself known, now in one and now in another fashion, appeared to him, saying, "Ask what I shall give thee." Never was there such a munificent offer; nor, we may say, such an answer. The reply pleased God, we are told; and if we take into account Solomon's inexperienced youth, the temptations to which his rank exposed him, the kind of pleasures kings have commonly pursued, and the usual objects of their ambition, it may well astonish us. Wisdom is preferred to riches, to long life, and to victory over enemies—the common ambition of kings. Honor.

able to any man, but especially to one so young as Solomon; the dictate of early piety and of the purest patriotism; expressing the most profound humility in circumstances favorable to the growth of pride; so moderate and so modest; breathing sentiments of the deepest gratitude to God, and of entire devotion to the public welfare; this choice, more like what might be expected of hoary age, the maturity of wisdom and the decay of passion, than of impetuous and inexperienced youth, may in part be attributed to Solomon's judicious and godly upbringing. He had what youth cannot too highly value. He had a prudent, pious, and God-fearing father.

Still, many have had Solomon's advantages whose lives have afforded but painful illustrations of the proverb, "A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him." Besides, Solomon, at the time he made this remarkable choice, had not received those extraordinary gifts with which God afterwards endowed him. It is plain therefore that he was no ordinary man—to be lost in the common crowd; but that, like Moses and David, and the Apostle Paul, and almost all whom God has called to do great things, he was endowed by nature, if I may say so, with great abilities. The choice, let it be observed, which reflected such honor on his understanding, was made not after, but before God bestowed on him the gifts of a marvellous, or rather miraculous wisdom.

The extraordinary wisdom of Solomon appeared in his character—

1. As a ruler,

There is an essential difference between learning and wisdom. An ounce of mother wit is better, it is said, than a pound of learning; and verifying that proverb, some of the most erudite men have shown themselves in the practical affairs of life, the management of their own or other people's business, not much better than born fools. There is a wide gulf also between wisdom in speech and wisdom in action, as is expressed in the confession, "I saw and approved the better, and yet did the worse," put in the mouth of one by a heathen moralist. Of this distinction Charles II., whom one of our greatest historians justly calls "a moral monster," presented a remarkable example—justifying, by the madness of his folly, his shameless indulgence of the lowest passions, the reckless and ruinous course he pursued against his better judgment, this description: "He never said a foolish thing nor ever did a wise one." There was a moment, but only a moment, when his subjects were ready to form no more favorable judgment of Solomon.

The night with its remarkable dream is passed. Next day the king, whose presence, according to Eastern customs, was open to his meanest subject, sits on the judgment seat. Two women of disreputable character, bearing a dead and a living child, approach. Each, according to her own tale, wronged, and clamoring loud for justice, lays claim to the living infant, and refuses to own the dead. There being no evidence in the case other than their own unsupported assertions, the spectators are at a loss which to believe—the infamous life of both making the one as little worthy of

credit as the other. The dilemma is well calculated to put their king's sagacity to the test ; and they wait with eager curiosity to see how he will decide. But with what horror are they struck. how do they stand aghast, and what unhappiness do they anticipate to themselves and their country when Solomon opens his lips to pronounce a judgment apparently as foolish as cruel ! The knot he is unable to untie he will cut. He calls for a sword, ordering the living child to be divided, and a half given to each. But how is the horror of the people turned to surprise and joy, and how do they hurry from the court to publish Solomon's fame, and pronounce him the paragon of judges, when, as one of the women springs forward with a scream, and seizing the uplifted arm of the executioner, turns her face to the king to cry, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it ;" he, testing the matter by this appeal to nature, points to the trembling, weeping, pallid, horror-stricken suppliant and says, "Give her the living child, she is the mother thereof!"

Thus Solomon held the scales of justice, and with a hand equally skilful and firm, he held the reins of government. On his accession to the throne, he did not find himself on a bed of roses ; nor in circumstances that belied the saying, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." The kingdom was suffering from the depression and disorder which long years of war are apt to produce under the most vigorous government ; and this evil was greatly aggravated at that time in the land of Israel by certain peculiar circumstances. The royal house was divided against itself. The rent

extended from the palace to the people, and produced rival factions, each supporting its own candidate for the throne. The army was commanded by military chiefs. These having distinguished themselves in David's wars, had obtained an influence which the crown could not afford to despise, and yet had not the power to control. Old, less indeed in years than in the decay of faculties which battles, and a life of domestic troubles and public broils had prematurely weakened, David in the closing years of his life held the reins of government with a feeble hand.

Such were the circumstances of the country on Solomon's accession; and nothing could be more admirable than the order his sagacity evoked out of this chaos and confusion. Without any breach of the laws of justice, or encroachment on the rights of the subject, he dexterously rid himself of every person dangerous to the government. What his head planned with wisdom, his hand executed with vigor; till his government, admirably organized in every department, resembled a vast machine, complete in its details, beautiful in its construction, with its numerous wheels all revolving in silent and perfect harmony.

2. As a man of learning and science.

Aristotle, the Stagyrice, and tutor of Alexander the Great, is usually called "the Father of Natural History." Without pronouncing him superior to either Plato or Socrates, he was certainly one of the greatest men any age, ancient or modern, has produced. Cuvier—and there is no more competent authority—says, that "he deserves as a naturalist to be taken as a model," that, so far as the

animal kingdom is concerned, "he has treated this branch of natural history with the greatest genius;" and that "the principal divisions which naturalists still follow are due to him" —to a man who lived nearly four hundred years before the Christian era. This is high praise; nor do I mean to detract from it. Yet, if any comparison were to be made between Aristotle and Solomon, it should be remembered that the Greek pursued his studies under peculiar advantages. Eight hundred talents of the royal revenue were spent on his researches; and not only was he encouraged by a sovereign who was smitten with a desire to know the nature of animals, but several thousand persons, according to Pliny, were engaged throughout Greece and the whole of Asia in providing him with materials; and while he had his whole time to devote without interruption or distraction to his studies, there is reason to believe that his great work on the animal kingdom is less the result of his own observation than a collection of all that had been observed by others.

But, whatever be the merits of the Stagyrite, he was not the first who earned laurels in this department of science. Five hundred years before his birth, Solomon had entered and explored the same field: and thus he, more than Aristotle or any other man, may claim the honor of being regarded as the father of natural science. Embracing a vast range of subjects, "he spake," says the inspired historian, "of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes." That brief

and simple record, that glimpse of the vast range of Solomon's studies, may well excite our wonder and admiration; especially when we take into account that this remarkable man devoted himself to these pursuits amid the temptations of an Eastern court, the cares of commerce, and the distractions and vast enterprises of a kingdom. His is a rare chapter in the history of kings. Where shall we find its parallel?

It is only a few fragments that remain to us either of his history or of his writings. We read in the Bible, "The rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?" and again, "The rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the Book of Nathan the Prophet, and in the prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite, and in the vision of Iddo the Seer?" But where are these records? With the exception, perhaps, of some passages extracted from their pages, and engrossed in the books of Kings and Chronicles, they have all perished. Undistinguished in their fate from thousands of books that have neither genius nor any other property to keep them afloat, these, which the church and world would not willingly have consented to lose, have sunk in the stream of time. They are lost. It is vain to regret that, only we may venture to say that had they been extant, Solomon's name would have occupied a foremost place in the roll of science. His discoveries and researches would have supplied abundant reasons for his unexampled fame, and for the pilgrimages which men, and women also, made from all parts of the world to hear his wisdom, and see his glory. Pos-

sessed of these writings, we should have read, not with more faith, but with a higher appreciation of its meaning, the eulogium of the inspired historian —“And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore. And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men ; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol ; and his fame was in all nations round about.”

3. As a poet and moralist.

Two at least of the Psalms are ascribed to Solomon. These are the 72nd, which, beginning with the prayer, “Give the king thy judgments, O God !” proceeds to describe in glowing language, and with prophetic reference to the blessings of the gospel, the peace and plenty and glory of his reign ; and the 127th, where, with reference probably to the temple, to the wall and watchman that protected Jerusalem, and to the permanence of his royal house, the king acknowledges his dependence on God. “Except the Lord build the house,” he says, “they labor in vain that build it : except the Lord keep the city, the watchmen waketh in vain. Children are the heritage of the Lord ; happy is he that hath his quiver full of them.” Besides these, we have, first, the Book of Proverbs, that unparalleled repertory of practical wisdom ; secondly, the Book of Ecclesiastes, a treatise on the vanity of this world written under the solemn shadows of another, with the tears and trembling hand of a late but true repentance ; and, thirdly, his Song,

that wonderful ode which, with its double and hidden meanings, the fervor of its language, and its highly Oriental imagery, it requires no common measure both of genius and piety to properly appreciate.

Yet these are but fragments of his works. Whether the Songs that are lost were written under no truer inspiration than what is loosely attributed to poets, and of what character they were—amatory, pious, or patriotic, we know not. But his muse was prolific ; his songs, the Bible tells us, being a thousand and five, and his proverbs not fewer than three thousand in number. Neither do we know whether these three thousand wise saws were over and above those preserved in the Book of Proverbs. It is more important to observe that in that book, of the greater part of which Solomon was undoubtedly the author, there is an amount of wisdom, knowledge of men and manners, sound sense and practical sagacity, such as no other work presents. It fulfils in a unique and pre-eminent degree, the requirements of effective oratory—not only every chapter, but every verse, and almost every clause of every verse expressing something which both “strikes and sticks.”

I cannot fancy the temptations, the difficulties, the dangers of life, through which this book, were youth or age to take it as their chart and compass, would not guide them with safety and honor. Its pages, opened at random, shine with gems, rarest specimens of shrewd observation and practical wisdom. The day was in Scotland, I may observe, when all her children were initiated into the art of reading through the Book of Proverbs. It would

be difficult, and indeed impossible, to find any book so suitable for such a purpose as that, with its simple Saxon and monosyllabic words. I have no doubt whatever, neither had the late Principal Lee, as appears by the evidence he gave before a committee of parliament—that the high character which Scotsmen earned in bygone years was mainly due to their early acquaintance with the Proverbs, the practical sagacity and wisdom of Solomon. To their familiarity with these was due their caution, prudence, economy, and foresight, their reverence for the persons and submission to the authority of parents, those properties by which, often rising from the humblest condition, they pursued their fortunes with success in every quarter of the globe. The book has unfortunately disappeared from our schools; and with its disappearance my countrymen are more and more losing their national virtues—in self-denial and self-reliance, in foresight and economy, in reverence of parents and abhorrence of public charity, some of the best characteristics of old manners and old times.

Such is a sketch of Solomon's natural and supernatural endowments. Insects are attracted to a candle; sea-birds to the lighthouse that stands on lonely rock or stormy steep; and shining in the dawn of science, through the gloom of these early ages, like a light in a dark place, Solomon attracted to the court and country which his wisdom illuminated visitors from all the regions round about. He was the wonder of his day; and yet there is no history from the perusal of which we are more ready to rise, exclaiming, "Lord, what is man?" The deepest soundings in a lake commonly lie under its

highest crags, and as the depths there corresponds to the elevation, so Solomon appears in some respects to have sunk as far below as in others he rose above the level of ordinary men.

Let us look at some of the spots in this sun—the errors and faults of Solomon.

In the first place, not content, as he might well have been, with surpassing all the kings of the earth in wisdom, he is smitten with the vulgar ambition of eclipsing them also in the amount of his revenues, in the luxuries, pomp, and splendor of his court. He became a voracious whirlpool, swallowing up the wealth of the country. He oppressed his subjects with taxes; alienating their affections from the House of David, and sowing the seeds of the revolt that burst out in the days of his son, and rent the kingdom asunder. Ere the close of his reign, his boundless extravagance and insatiable ambition had brought Israel to the verge of ruin. The flight of Jeroboam into Egypt, where, as a vulture sits watching the dying throes of its prey, he waited the death of Solomon, and those outbursts of rebellion by Hadad in Edom, and by Rezon in Syria, which occurred in his life-time, were but the trembling of the mountain that precedes the discharge of the volcano, the distant thunder that heralds the storm.

In the second place, Solomon gave himself up to a life of sensual indulgences. Out-Heroding Herod—going far beyond other kings in these pleasures, as in wealth and wisdom, he had seven hundred wives (all of them princesses), and three hundred concubines. A most shocking example for a king to set! yet in justice to Solomon, it is fair to

observe that this vast and crowded harem was probably, to some extent, maintained for display; part of the state of the great in those days lying in the number of their wives, as it lies now—a less, but still a grievous burden—in the number of their servants.

In the third place, Solomon became an idolater; addicting himself, shame to say, not only to idolatrous, but to cruel and obscene rites. What a fall was there! He who built the sacred Temple, and offered up with devout lips the sublime prayer with which it was dedicated to the service of Jehovah—the only and true God, lived to “go after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Milcom, the abomination of the Amorites.” As if in open contempt of Jehovah, he raised within sight of His holy temple “an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon, in the hill that is before Jerusalem.” The wife of Elimelech had gone forth from Bethlehem well and wealthy, with a husband at her side and two gallant sons at her back. She returns a lone, broken-down, impoverished widow—bereaved of her children, stripped of all her wealth, sunk into the lowest poverty, with no friend on earth but a widowed alien, poor as herself; and such was the contrast between her present and past condition that the people, as they stood at their doors and saw her go up the street, could hardly believe their own eyes. Their pity swallowed up in surprise at this striking and strange vicissitude, they lifted up their hands to say, “Is this Naomi?” But there is much in the degradation into which Solomon fell, in the scenes in which

this wisest of men appears playing such an unworthy and wicked part, to call from our lips still stronger expressions of grief and wonder. "How art thou fallen, son of the morning!"

We have not room to trace all the causes of this strange and melancholy downfall, but may specify two or three that should be lessons and warnings to us.

We find one in his too eager pursuit of wealth. The love of money went far to eat the love of God out of his heart. Besides, acquired as his wealth chiefly was through commercial intercourse with heathen nations, it exposed him, and his countrymen also, to influences dangerous to their morals and religion. Let our own nation be warned. She holds a foremost place in the race of commerce. Our wealth is year by year increasing at an unparalleled ratio. But let us rejoice with trembling; warned in time by the fall of Solomon, and the ruin of his house and kingdom. There are merchants and manufacturers in our country who have need to remember that the wealth which is obtained at the expense of the morals of the people costs much too high a price; and it were well for all to remember that no man is justified in exposing himself to circumstances or associates dangerous to his soul, for the sake of pay or place, of escaping poverty, or of earning a fortune.

Another cause of Solomon's fall may perhaps be found in his introduction of sensuous forms and a splendid ritual into the worship of God. A taste for these strongly marks our own age; and may not God have set him up as a beacon of warning to the churches? With no bad, but probably good, inten-

tions he turned the simple services of the ancient Jewish worship into a gorgeous ritual. Perhaps he hoped to draw people to the house of God by services designed to attract the eye and gratify the senses. I am the more free to say so, as I see no evidence in the Bible that he had any authority whatever for many of the forms he introduced into the worship of God. The consequence of this policy was, as it always has been, that outward forms came to usurp the place of religion. Their observance was substituted for practical piety; and religion at length suffered the fate of a tree that is choked to death by the creepers that, though perhaps bearing beautiful flowers, have wrapped themselves around it; or, to vary the figure, the fate of warriors in those days, when, sheathed in iron from head to heel, they sank on the field of battle, not so much under the blows of their enemies as the weight of their arms.

Another, and indeed the chief, cause of Solomon's fall lay in his marriages. His wives, who were heathen women, turned away his heart in his old age after other gods. So Scripture tells us; and not to our surprise. He may have flattered himself that he would persuade them to embrace the faith; and that though he failed, he himself should suffer no injury by tolerating their idolatry and granting them liberty of worship. The result was otherwise; and the issues of his experiment warn us against tolerating vice, lending any countenance to error, or allowing liberty to run into license.

Solomon's case presents the strongest protest against unhallowed marriage: a remarkable ex-

ample of the danger to which they expose their souls who, fascinated by beauty or blinded by affection, or under the influence of other and less creditable motives, become, as the case may be, the husbands or wives of the ungodly. For a pious person to marry one, however otherwise attractive, who is a stranger to the grace of God, and feels no sympathy with him in his love to Christ—who though not hostile is indifferent to religion, is to tempt the fate of the poor moth, that, attracted by its glare, flutters around the candle, to plunge at length into the flame, and lose its wings—perhaps its life. Does not almost all experience prove that, in the case of such incongruous and unhallowed marriages, the good are more likely to be perverted than the bad converted? When, springing from the bank into the pool where one is perishing, the brave swimmer approaches the object of his pity, and circles round and round him to catch his hair or hand, what care he takes to keep clear of the drowning grasp!—knowing how much easier it would be, should he once come within his clutches, for the drowning to pull him down than for him to pull the drowning out.

And that such a fate is most likely to be the result of unhallowed marriages is proved as well by the earliest records of mankind as by all later experience. I read their condemnation in words which represent them as one of the chief sources of that monstrous pollution from which God washed the world by the waters of Noah's flood. "The sons of God," says the sacred record, "came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children unto them; and God saw that the wicked-

ness of man was great on the earth, and that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them." In regard to such marriages we may ask "How can two walk together, except they be agreed? Can a man touch pitch and not be defiled? or take fire into his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?" Not only so, but unions between the God-fearing and the godless, the devout and undevout, are expressly condemned. God forbids the banns. Inequality in point of color, or age, or wealth, or accomplishments, or rank, Christian sect and denomination, is no sin. Marriage under such circumstances may not be wise, in certain cases, but is never wicked. The one inequality from which God's people should allow neither interest nor affection to blind their eyes, is that from which Solomon suffered, and God, by the mouth of Paul, forbids, saying, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

We cannot enter on the much and long disputed question whether, notwithstanding his great fall and sad backslidings, Solomon does not present an example of one saved at the uttermost—a brand plucked from the burning. We hope, and indeed think, that there is good reason to believe he does. Regarded in that light, let his case encourage the greatest sinner to return, and cast himself at Jesus' feet, crying, "Save me, I perish!"—the greatest

backslider to retrace his steps, and repair to the throne of mercy, saying, "Heal my backslidings, and love me freely!" Still, taking the most charitable view of Solomon, and clinging to the hope that this wise and famous man, who was on earth a type of Christ's person, found mercy, and is now in heaven—a trophy of Christ's cross, of the love that welcomes the returning penitent and of the blood that cleanseth the chief of sinners; his case is confessedly one surrounded with great difficulties. The day will reveal the truth. Till then a dark cloud hangs over his fate; and, had I to seek a motto for his tomb, had I to engrave a lesson on his history, it were this: **THUS SAITH THE LORD, LET NOT THE WISE MAN GLORY IN HIS WISDOM, NEITHER LET THE MIGHTY MAN GLORY IN HIS MIGHT; LET NOT THE RICH MAN GLORY IN HIS RICHES; BUT LET HIM THAT GLORIETH, GLORY IN THIS, THAT HE UNDERSTANDETH AND KNOWETH ME."**

Rehoboam the Foolish Man.

BREAKERS a-head!—the fearful sound, which is no sooner raised by the outlook, and passed along the deck, than the wheel flies round, and the ship's head, if haply not too late, is put on the other tack—this was the cry Rehoboam might have heard when his father's death called him to the helm. Like the flash of the snowy foam descried through the pitchy night, and the hoarse roar that rises above rattling cordage, creaking timbers, and howling wind, as the waves thunder on the reef, there were many things in the condition of Israel at the time of Rehoboam's succession to warn and to alarm him. A crisis had arrived, requiring prompt but prudent action, consummate skill, a cool head, and a firm hand in him who would extricate the state, and save the throne.

Turning giddy on the height to which they had been too suddenly raised, or intoxicated with power, kings have sacrificed the interests of morality and religion, the public welfare, the loyalty and respect of their subjects, to the gratification of their passions. Acting without the fear of God, as if the people were made for them, and not they for the people, they have astonished the world by their madness. What an example of that the first Napoleon!—him whom bleeding nations, roused to

resistance, dragged from a throne he might have left to his descendants, and cast into the lone prison of a sea-girt isle, to pine away the last few miserable years of life, like an eagle chained to a rock. Our own history supplies similar, almost equally remarkable, examples in the last representatives of the Stuart dynasty. Love of despotism cost the unfortunate Charles I. his head; by brutal lusts his eldest son undermined the foundations of the throne; and, by his bigotry, the youngest overturned the tottering fabric. The latter—James the Seventh of Scotland, and the Second of England—though a bad man, was a bigoted Papist; one who, like many of the communion he adhered to, seemed to think that his crimes against morality might be atoned for by those he committed in the interests of the Church. He aimed at reimposing on the neck of our free country the hateful yoke of Rome. Our fathers resisted, and God defeated his scheme; yet it cost him and his family the throne of these three kingdoms, and gave occasion to the wit of one who said of James, he was fool enough to give three crowns for a Mass.

There is a striking story told of a professional fool—one of those men, half rogues and half fools, to use a common expression, who once formed an appendage of every royal house. His sovereign and master, on investing him with staff and cap and bells—the insignia of his office—told him to wear them till he found a fool greater than himself. In course of time the king fell ill, and was at the point of death. On telling the witling that he was to leave him, the other asked where he was going. On a long journey, and to a far country, from which

I shall never return, replied the dying man. And what provision, asked the fool, have you made for it? Provision! said his master, who had been a bad and irreligious man, with a heavy sigh, Alas, I have made none! Whereupon, with a gleam of sense shot like a sunbeam through the clouds, the fool quickly doffed staff and cap and bells, and laid them down before the king, saying, They are yours; I was only to keep them till I found—and I have found him—a fool greater than myself. Now, whether committed by prince or peasant, the greatest folly, no doubt, is to live forgetful of the “long journey,” and the need of seeking an interest in Jesus Christ; but in the conduct of his government and management of temporal affairs, none that ever wore a crown had a better claim to the cap and bells than he who stands in this chapter as the type of folly.

Rehoboam's, perhaps, is the most remarkable instance the world ever saw of this, that, whatever may be hereditary—titles, estates, health, or disease—wisdom, like saving grace, is not. Some of the best men have had the worst sons; and in Solomon, we have the wisest man father of the greatest fool that ever verified the words, “they heap up riches, and know not who shall gather them,” wasted a fortune, or lost a throne. We have only to read his history, to see how fully he realized those gloomy forebodings which have marred the pleasure many expected from their accumulated gains, and amid which the sun of Solomon set in clouds and darkness. “I hated,” he says, “all the labor which I had taken under the sun, because I should leave it unto the man that shall be after me, and who

knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool?" The folly of Rehoboam, which appeared in many things, culminates in—

His conduct in the revolt.

To trace that event to its origin, we must go further back than the misgovernment or crimes of his father Solomon, and ascend the stream of history to an early period of the Jewish commonwealth. Like many of the evils which separate brethren in Christ and afflict His Church, it had its source in jealousy—the jealous feeling with which Ephraim regarded the other tribes, and especially Judah. Covering the largest extent of country, and mustering most men for battle, they were the most powerful tribe. Proud of that, they would brook no inferiority. We find the Ephraimites, for example, quarrelling with Gideon because he had presumed to fight with Midian without summoning them to his aid; nor could he pacify these haughty and high-handed warriors but by humbling himself and addressing them in such flattering terms as these—“What have I now done in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?” The same vile, cruel, and hateful passion broke out more fiercely still against Jephthah, another saviour of the land. Animated with that sectarian spirit which denies or depreciates the good done by others, this same tribe of Ephraim said, “Wherefore passest thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee?—we will burn thine house upon thee with fire.” So haughtily did they bear themselves, and so hotly resent what affronted their pride, that, blinded by passion to the monstrous

sin of fratricide, they turned their swords against Jephthah and his gallant band—sacrificing to their jealousy the forty-two thousand men of their own tribe whom they left dead, as they fled defeated from the field of battle. To this passion may be attributed also their stanch adherence to the house of Saul during the seven years that David reigned over the tribe of Judah. At length, no doubt, along with the other tribes, they acquiesced in what appeared to be the arrangements of Providence: crowning David at Hebron king over all the land. Then, as the history relates, came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, "Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh: also in time past when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel; and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be captain over all Israel." Yet, though David, alive to the danger, so conducted his government as to suspend the jealousy of Ephraim; and though it smouldered during the whole reign of Solomon, the old passion, like the sins of an unsanctified professor of religion, was there; ready to break out; needing but causes sufficiently active to revive and burst into flame—and these, as events proved, were silently at work during a considerable part of the reign of Solomon.

It is a remarkable fact that Solomon violated every one of the injunctions which Moses laid down to guide the kings of Israel when the time arrived that the tribes, to be neighbor-like, should choose a king. As if he had resolved of express intention to set God's instructions at defiance, every one thing the king was forbidden to do he did. For

example, speaking in the name of God and in view of the future, Moses said of their king to be, "He shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses; neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he multiply to himself silver and gold." This, in the form of inhibition or interdict, looks less like a simple warning than a direct prophecy of Solomon's crimes and career. He did all these forbidden things; and thereby, as well as by the idolatries he introduced—all gross, many of them obscene—he forfeited the respect, and, to a large extent, alienated the affections of the best of his people; those prophets and pious men by whose prayers to God and influence with the community the state might have been saved in its hour of greatest danger. Besides this, he made his reign so burdensome to the country through monopolies and taxation as to revive the jealousy of Ephraim, and strengthen the enemies of his house; and at length force a patient people on the first favorable occasion to remonstrate, and, when their remonstrances were not only treated with neglect but answered with insolence and insults, to rebel. That occasion came when the tribes assembled to crown his son and successor at Shechem. And when Jeroboam, the enemy both of father and son, called from Egypt to be the mouthpiece, and head, and hand of an oppressed and angry people, appeared on the scene, "the hour and the man had come."

This man, Jeroboam, belonged to the tribe of Ephraim. He had been a distinguished soldier, and at one time a great favorite of Solomon's.

“He was,” says the author of the Book of Kings, “a mighty man of valor ; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was industrious, made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph,”—in other words, over the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim. Little dreaming, like ourselves often on the eve of important events, what of good or evil a day or hour might bring forth, he one day left Jerusalem to find himself in a lonely part, and at a turn of the road, face to face with a prophet, Ahijah the Shilonite. The man of war makes obeisance to the man of God, who proceeds straightway to lay rough hands on him, and pluck the cloak from his shoulders. Taken by surprise, or overawed by the other’s presence and sacred character, Jeroboam neither resists nor remonstrates ; but stands by to see the prophet rend his garment into twelve pieces. But how much greater his astonishment when he who had ventured on this bold rude liberty counts off ten of them, and presents them to him, saying, “Take thee ten pieces ; for thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon” (or rather, as is afterwards stated, out of his son’s hand), “and will give ten tribes to thee.” A secret this ill to keep. Jeroboam may have said it in confidence to his wife, and she, probably, in turn to her gossips ; but however it happened, whether from incautiousness or intention on his part, or whether by some dark hint which Ahijah dropped, enough oozed out to alarm Solomon, and render it necessary for Jeroboam, if he would save his life, to fly for refuge to the land of Egypt. There, verifying the words, “He that believeth shall not make haste,” and teaching

statesmen, churchmen, and better men than he, in all circumstances to wait on, rather than anticipate, Providence, he bides his time. It comes in a call from the people of Israel; prepared to revolt if reform and redress are refused. Solomon is dead; the time is favorable for the attempt; and so they send to Egypt for Jeroboam, either because they had some, though it might be an imperfect, knowledge of the story of the torn garment and the ten pieces, or because, attracted by his reputation for statesmanship and military talents, they regarded him as the most likely man to obtain them redress, or if that was refused, to head the revolt, and conduct it to a successful issue. They judged rightly that a man of superior rank or talents at the head of the masses is as necessary to the success of a revolution as the glittering steel-head fixed on its wooden shaft to the worth of a battle-spear.

All things thus arranged, the mine dug beneath the throne, and the train laid ready for firing, they repair to Shechem to the coronation of Rehoboam. Its ceremonies are brought to a close. Surrounded by a splendid retinue, the king, probably flattering himself that he has won the favor of Ephraim by selecting its chief city for the place of his coronation, sits on his throne, high and lifted up. The sacred oil has been poured, and the crown, flashing back the sunbeams from the gems on its golden arches, has been placed on his head; and now, when the white-robed priests from the temple have chanted the last psalm, is the time for ten times ten thousand knees to bend, and ten times ten thousand voices to rend the air with jubilant shouts of "God

save the King!" But no cheers rise from the multitude, echoing back, and drowning in a full ocean-like swell the plaudits of obsequious courtiers. An ominous gloom hangs on all faces. An ominous silence weighs on the assembly. Observing how, though his young councillors assume airs of insolent contempt, the gray-haired men who stood by his father Solomon regard the scene with grave and anxious looks, Rehoboam himself turns pale, blenching at these ominous signs. And not without reason; for, the crowd dividing to let him pass, Jeroboam comes to the front. Now, as the people catch sight of their champion, the air is rent with cheers; and when these cease, with the bearing of a man who has looked on more formidable sights than a king, and hears the tramp of millions at his back, he addresses Rehoboam, saying, "Thy father made our yoke heavy; now, therefore, make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee." To any ears but those of a fool, these words, so plain, so brief, and unlike the flattering adulatory terms familiar to Rehoboam, had a ring which showed that the speaker was a man not to be trifled with.

It is idle for us to inquire whether the people were justified in assuming the attitude they did assume, whether the statement of their spokesman, Jeroboam, was, or was not, borne out by facts. A great political crisis had arrived. The peril was imminent. The nation was on the verge of rebellion; nor could a rebellion be averted but by the most skilful and, indeed, delicate management. The king stood above a magazine of combustibles.

An angry word or look, and the spark falls which fires them, and shakes his kingdom to its foundations—shatters it in pieces; the ship hangs on a mountain wave, close by the thundering reef—a wrong turn of the helm, and she goes crashing on the rocks, to be scattered in fragments on the deep. A difficult post Rehoboam's; and to no man was the saying ever less appropriate than to him, *the right man in the right place.*

At the suggestion, probably, of some sage and aged councillor who, prompt to see and anxious to avert the danger, whispers it in his ear, his first step is marked by wisdom. He will reply in three days—a proposal which the people regard as reasonable, and, averse to precipitate matters or to rush into rebellion, at once agree to. A council is summoned. It meets. The old men advise concession—that the king should speak the people fair; yield to their present humor; bend to the wave which would in that case, foaming and formidable as it looked, pass harmless over him. They assure him that a little sacrifice of his pride and dignity now would bind the nation hereafter, and forever, to his service. There was sound sense in this. How inconstant the popular humor, and how easily a skilful hand may manage, calm, and turn even a fierce and furious multitude, is well known, and was signally illustrated by an incident in the life of the first Napoleon. When but a distinguished officer of the French army, he was ordered to meet a mob in the streets of Paris, and disperse them. At that time the slimness of his form corresponded to the smallness of his stature. As he advanced with troops

and two or three cannon on the scene, the roar of the suffering and ferocious multitude announced their approach; and at a turn of the narrow street they came pouring down like an avalanche, that, uprooting trees and sweeping houses from their foundations, descends thundering into the valley. Ordering his guns to the front, he halted; and, struck by his formidable front and determined attitude, so did they. Averse to shed the blood of citizens, he began to parley with them. Whereupon a woman of fierce visage and enormous size stepped out—upbraiding him and his fellow soldiers as living on the fat of the land, while she and her industrious compatriots were at the point of starving. With the promptitude that seizes the moment; and won him afterwards many a hard-fought field, he stepped out too; and placing his spare, tiny form beside that mountain of flesh, he addressed her companions, saying, "I appeal to you, my friends, whether this good lady or I look most like starving?" The effect was electric. The humor and force of the reply carried the mob as by a *coup de main*, peals of laughter succeeded to rage; and, both powder and blood cleverly saved by a stroke of humor, the people dispersed to their homes in peace. There Napoleon was the right man in the right place: not here the son of Solomon. The first poured oil on the stormy waters; the second, oil on a burning fire.

Illustrating the adage, "Whom God wishes to destroy he first makes mad," Rehoboam rejected the counsel of the wise old men who had stood by the throne, and sharpened their own wits on the wisdom of his father Solomon. A man at this

time of forty years, he might have known that, to use a common proverb, a gray head is not found on young shoulders ; yet, in this crisis of his affairs, he turns his back on aged councillors to follow the advice of rash and inexperienced youths—of his own gay companions, the ministers of his guilty pleasures, and flatterers of his person. It was very foolish to seek their advice, but it was the height of folly, sheer madness, to take it, and at their suggestion lash the people into rebellion with words like these, “My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke ; my father chastened you with whips, but I will chasten you with scorpions.” Adding insult to injury, to injustice haughty and intolerable insolence, this was not to drop a spark, but cast a blazing torch into a magazine of combustibles. With the suddenness and violence of an explosion, the pent-up indignation of years bursts forth into open revolt. Struck with terror at his own work, Rehoboam leaps from his throne ; and as he flies the tumult, hears the knell of his kingdom ringing in the cry, “To your tents, O Israel ! what portion have we in David ? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.”

It seems hardly possible for Rehoboam to do anything more unwise than this. Yet his next act is one where he surpasses himself—like the capital on a pillar, it crowns his folly. Though it might be shutting the door when the steed is stolen, or the desperate action of one who grasps, as he drowns, at a passing straw, he will make an effort to recall the people to their obedience ; he will send a man to reason with rebellion, and talk them out of their mutinous spirit. Nor was he without

such as might have ruled the fierce democracy—men adhering to his cause, as brave sailors to a wreck, distinguished for their piety, or the advocates of popular rights, or warriors of renown, whom the people regarded with reverence and would have heard with respect. But like a man demented, without a glimmering of common sense, he pitches on one, of all his court, the most unsuitable for his purpose. A messenger from the king!—this cry lays a momentary arrest on the revolt; and when the expectation of the people is excited, who steps out to address them but Adoram—the officer that had exacted the taxes which drove them on rebellion. At the sight of this obnoxious tool of despotism, the object of their bitterest hatred, their rage knew no bounds. They rose; they fell on the unhappy man; they stoned the life out of him. Rehoboam has but made bad worse. Panic-struck at the news, he throws himself into his chariot to fly to Jerusalem, a sadder but not a wiser man; to prove by his future career that it is not the fear of man, but of God, which is the beginning of wisdom, and that, as his own father said, “though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.”

Though in not marrying heathen wives, as Solomon did, and in providing separate establishments for his sons, thereby averting domestic broils, Rehoboam, as the Bible says, “did wisely,” yet were it needful still further to justify the opprobrious epithet we have attached to his name, we should find ample materials in his conduct on other occasions than the revolt. He might have seen, indeed he

must have known, for instance, that the dismemberment of the kingdom was a judgment brought on his father's house for his father's sins. Yet, regardless of this, and reckless of consequences, moved neither by the injuries which Solomon produced nor by the repentance he expressed for his crimes, Rehoboam repeated them. "He desired," it is said, "many wives;" and had no fewer than eighteen, besides sixty concubines. In point of numbers, these, no doubt, fell far short of his father's. Yet, like the negative virtues which Pharisees boast of, like the superiority some claim over such as have gone greater lengths than themselves in vice, this was probably due more to the want of way than the want of will, to the restraints of circumstances rather than the restraints of conscience. But however that may be, he set an example of immorality before the nation which, like the water that falling on mountain tops descends through fissures into the valleys, was sure to find its way through the different grades down to the lowest strata of society—carrying corruption of morals and manners along with it. And when we imagine the effect of such an example on Judah in the days of Rehoboam, or contemplate the corruption of morals that, issuing from the court of Charles II., poured its foul and fetid streams over our own land, we cannot be too thankful that we have a Sovereign who frowns on every form of vice, and presents to her nobles and to all classes in the country an illustrious example of every personal, domestic, and public virtue. I doubt if we are sufficiently thankful for this great mercy.

Again : Rehoboam followed his father's example in committing a yet graver crime. When Jeroboam, his rival, set up the calves at Dan and Bethel, a party in Israel taught future ages, the ministers and members of churches in our own, what part they should act when earthly interests and religious principles conflict. Not the priests only, but the pious people of the land had to choose between abandoning their faith or their fortunes ; between deserting their God or deserting their homes. Some, as will always happen in such circumstances, may have proved renegades, and broken down in the day of trial ; but vast multitudes from her mountains, plains, and shores, poured out of Israel to settle, far from their sweet homes and paternal fields, in the land of Judah. This influx of piety, like that of the Huguenots on our own land, or of the suffering Protestants who fled from the Low Countries to escape the bloody cruelties of Philip and the Duke of Alva, brought a blessing with it to Judah ; and under this holy influence and God's chastening hand, the conduct of Rehoboam and the fortunes of his kingdom underwent, though but a temporary, a manifest improvement. After relating how "the priests and Levites that were in all Israel resorted to Rehoboam out of all their coasts ;" and how "the Levites left their suburbs and their possessions, and came to Judah and Jerusalem ;" and how, following them—the natural leaders of the people in matters belonging to religion—"out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came to Jerusalem ;" the sacred historian tell us, "so they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and

made Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, strong." But, alas, with no permanent result. In his prosperity, Rehoboam, like many others, forgot the lessons of adversity. Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked. The dog returned to his vomit—the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Rehoboam had been a witness of the calamities idolatry had brought on his father and his father's house, and he had had experience also of the blessings which attend the steps and swell the train of piety. Properly affected by the circumstances, he promised for a time to be another and a better man ; but as a strong and impetuous river, though diverted for a while into a new, returns to its old channel, so he relapsed into idolatry. Nor did he sin alone. As it happens with crew and boats and cargo and floating wreck, when some mighty ship sinks in the deep, this man, whom no adversity could improve, nor experience warn, nor lessons the most painful educate, dragged down the nation with himself. "Judah," it is said, "did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins, which they committed above all that their fathers had done ; building them high places and images and groves on every high hill and under every green tree," and amid a shocking corruption of public and private morals, "doing according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel."

No reformation of manners can be relied on which does not spring from a change of heart. It was with Rehoboam and his country according to the parable, "When the unclean spirit is gone out

of a man, he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished: then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." This case of Rehoboam is by no means singular; to be regarded as exceptional or abnormal. In many others who for a while seemed reformed, the last state has proved worse than the first. They have left the austerities of Lent to plunge into the excesses of a carnival. Such cases are not without their lessons; they teach us to make sure of a true interest in Jesus Christ—to seek a new heart. Without that no change of manners contains the elements of permanence; and thus they who maintain the most decent exterior have as much need as the vilest sinner to remember these solemn words, "Verily, verily," saith our Lord, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God!"

As to the causes which will account for Rehoboam's career of sin and folly, many may be adduced. It was his misfortune, as it has been that of others, to be the son of one whose public engagements left him little time to bestow on the home-education of his family. It was also his fate, and I may add the same misfortune to him that it has been to others, to be born to wealth and power, and never to know, in obscurity, in hardships, in early struggles, and in straitened circumstances, what it was to bear the yoke in his youth. A greater misfortune still, Rehoboam did not find in the court of his father a school, nor in his example

a pattern of morals. Through his position and his prospects as heir apparent to the throne, he was exposed, in the society of parasites, flatterers, and gay companions, to a thousand dangerous and seductive influences. Let his fate warn us against his sins, and teach us to seek the grace which, a greater marvel than his safety in the lions' den, preserved Daniel and his companions pure amid the impurities of the court of Babylon. But who that knows their own innate depravity, that folly is bound up in the heart even of a child, how prone the best are to fall, and how the best have fallen, will, in judging this unhappy man, mingle asperity with censure? In judging others it were well to imitate the candor, and lenity, and charity of Luther, who hearing an obscure person condemn some fault committed by the Elector in terms of the harshest severity, rebuked him, saying, Hold your tongue ; and remember that for one devil you have to fight with, the Elector has to fight with ten.

There is one short sentence in Rehoboam's history which supplies the key, more perhaps than anything else, to his sin and folly—"his mother's name was Naamah, an Ammonitess." She was by blood an alien, and by religion a heathen. Unhappy in many things, but unhappiest most in such a mother, he begins to be regarded more with pity than astonishment. The letters written on water are hardly formed when they are filled up : on the other hand, the finger that traces them on stone leaves no visible impression on its indurated surface ; but plastic clay, midway between what is hard and soft, offers to the gentlest finger a sub-

stance which both receives and retains an impression. Such is the heart that youth and childhood offer to a mother's influences. Hence her power to mould, for good or evil, the character of her children ; and hence the gratitude they owe to God who have had a mother that taught their little feet to walk in the ways of his commandments, and encouraged their feeble efforts to rise to heaven on the wings of prayer—at the piety of whose bosom their own was kindled. “I had a bad mother,” explains many a wreck. “I had a good mother,” is the way many account, under God, for their success in this life, and their salvation in the next. Let mothers therefore feel and tremble, and pray under a sense of their power and responsibility. How much depends on them—like the mothers of old—on their bringing their little ones to Jesus for his hands and blessing ! Hear how Cowper sings of the boy by a mother's knee :—

“ His heart, now passive, yields to thy command.
 Secure it thine, its key is in thine hand.
 If thou desert thy charge, and throw it wide,
 Nor heed what guest there enter and abide,
 Complain not if attachments lewd and base
 Supplant thee in it, and usurp thy place.
 But if thou guard its secret chambers sure
 From vicious inmates, and delights impure,
 Either his gratitude shall hold him fast,
 And keep him warm and filial to the last ;
 Or, if he prove unkind (as who can say
 But, being man, and therefore frail, he may ?)
 One comfort yet shall cheer thine aged heart,
 Howe'er he slight thee, thou hast done thy part.

Jehu the Zealot.

THE curtain rises to show us the city of Ramouth Gilead, embosomed among mountains in the background ; and on the stage a banquet, or probably a council of war, where Jehu sits surrounded by the most distinguished officers of the army of Israel. Suddenly, interrupting their potations or cogitations, one enters the chamber, whose shaggy raiment, appearance, and bold bearing bespeak him a prophet, or one belonging to the order. He comes from Elisha ; and the Jews have a tradition that it was Jonah who, according to them, succeeded Gehazi in that prophet's service. Whether it was so or not, this messenger of Heaven goes straight up, without ceremony or formal introduction, to Jehu, saying, I have an errand unto thee, O captain ! And he, out of respect for his holy office, a gallant soldier as yet who had shed no blood but in fair battle, and dreaded no evil, rises at once to grant what the other requested—a private interview, furnishing no illustration of the saying—

“Conscience makes cowards of us all.”

They retire into an inner chamber. When they are alone, and he has seen that the door is shut, the stranger, stooping down, draws from under

neath his shaggy garment, where he had concealed it, a horn of oil; and raising himself to his full stature, empties it on Jehu's head, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel: and thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezebel: for the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab every male, and him that is shut up and left in Israel: and I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah; and the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her."

Having delivered himself of a message that might well strike any man speechless with astonishment, ere the captain of the host has recovered sufficiently to detain or question him, he vanishes; like a conspirator against Jehu's life, who had sought a private interview to assassinate him as Ehud did the king of Moab; or like one who has lighted the match that carries fire to the mine and ends in a terrific explosion, he opens the door and flies—agreeably to his master's instructions, disappearing as suddenly as he came. And the incident I have related was indeed followed by an explosion that shook the whole land; hurled the king from his throne; and buried him, his bloody mother, her idolatrous priests, and every member of the royal family in a common grave, under the ruins of the house of Ahab.

With the bow bent to the breaking, their loyal

and long-enduring patience exhausted, the people of Israel had probably got tired out with the cruelties and idolatries of the reigning family. It was now as with a ripe pear that drops to the touch: as with a mighty stone hanging on the brow of a hill, but so undermined by winter frosts and summer rains, that it needs but the push of a bold strong hand, and it leaves its bed to be shattered as it bounds from crag to crag, or be buried out of sight in the dark depths of the lake below. Aware of this, Jehu saw the sceptre within his reach; and how, stretching out his hand to seize it, not only with the sanction but at the call of heaven, his most ambitious dreams might be realized. With such bloody work, yet brilliant prospects before him, his dreams—what in his more sober moments he had dismissed as dangerous, wild, and airy phantoms—about to be fulfilled, no wonder his countenance, as he followed the flying messenger to the door, bore marks of strong mental agitation. His fellows, who saw that he had received some strange and stirring news, ask, Is all well? With cunning equal to his courage, the astute soldier at first evades the question; assumes a modest air, as if of all that company he was the least ambitious. Pressed on all sides, even bluntly told that he was lying, he at length, but to appearance reluctantly, and only in concession to their importunity, comes out with it; and having won their good graces, makes confidants of his fellow-soldiers.

Now, as has happened in many other cases, the fable of Actæon is realized. Changed by the offended goddess into the form of a stag, the

hunter was pursued and devoured by his own hounds—and now the throne of the house of Ahab is assailed and overturned by those who were sworn to support it—the army which his son, Joram, maintained to defend his crown and oppress his subjects, transfers its allegiance, with the facility of mercenaries, from him to Jehu. No sooner do the captains of the host see the sheen of the sacred oil on Jehu's locks, and get from his lips the story of the interview, than extemporizing a throne, and casting their garments—eastern symbol of homage—at his feet, rougher heralds than usually proclaim the successor to the throne, they fill the air with the blare of trumpets, and cry, Jehu is king! So sudden and sweeping, I may remark, are the revolutions to which military governments are exposed; especially when profanity rather than prayer reigns in the camp, and the army, made up of the scum of the nation, is officered by ungodly and immoral men. A striking contrast to Cromwell's, which was not less distinguished for its piety than for its fidelity to its leader, and the brilliant victories its arms achieved, such was Joram's army. Their impiety and profanity break out in the contempt with which they spoke of a servant of the living God. Wherefore, said they to Jehu, came this *mad fellow* to thee?—an ungodly, scoffing crew, they had no more respectful term for the holy man. Yet why should we wonder to find God's servants reckoned and denounced as *mad* by a world to which his own wisdom is foolishness?

Before glancing at the part—so bloody, conspicuous, and successful—which Jehu played in the successive tragedies of this revolution, we may here

take occasion to observe that the true pillars of a state and throne stand in the freedom, the piety, and the affections of the people. Nations must be ruled somehow, either by love or fear, by the Bible or the bayonet; and ruled mainly by the former, under the influence to a large extent of moral and religious principles, what a contrast, in respect both of the security of the throne and the stability of its government, does our country present to that of France—gifted, as its people are, with uncommon genius, and inspired with the most ardent love of liberty? It is nigh two hundred years since this happy island exchanged one dynasty for another, and passed—rare circumstance—through a peaceful and bloodless revolution. How many in the course of a single lifetime has France seen! She seems, indeed, to keep up like a boy's spinning-top by virtue of incessant revolutions; and destitute to a frightful extent as her people are of good morals and religion, how many more is she destined to suffer? We ourselves have lived to see her in the throes of five or six different political convulsions. The streets of her gay and lovely capital flashing with musketry, and running red with her citizens' blood, might have reminded the world of God's righteous judgment; and how, as has been well said, France lost so much good blood through the massacre of the Huguenots, that she has staggered and reeled ever since.

In the conduct of the revolution which God had committed to his hands, Jehu displayed as much wisdom as energy. His conduct was like his driving—"he drove furiously;" but the times demanded it. Dangerous in all cases when the

crisis has come, hesitation or delay had been fatal in his. Having—by appearing to consult them—won the favor of his companions in arms, enlisted them in his cause, and so turned into partisans those who might otherwise have been rivals, his first step is to catch the bird in the nest. He must seize the king, where he lay in Jezreel. Should tidings of this revolution reach him, Joram takes the alarm and escapes ; so, with a promptitude that deserved and was likely to secure success, Jehu hurries trusty men to the gates with this order : “ Let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Israel.” He will be his own messenger. The snake rattles before it strikes ; but the lightning strikes before it thunders—whom it kills never hears the peal. And it was with the suddenness and surprise of a thunderbolt Jehu sought to launch himself on the head of Joram. So the cry is, To horse, to horse ! all is haste and bustle ; men are arming ; women are weeping ; nasty farewells are said ; and the gate thrown open at his approach, out drives Jehu with his chosen men to lash his foaming horses along the road that lay, a day’s march, between Jezreel and Ramoth Gilead. No stay ; no delay ; to the surprise and terror of the peasant ploughing his father’s fields, on sweeps that cloud of dust, where chariots and horsemen and battle brands are dimly and briefly seen. The Jordan at length is reached. A moment to slake the thirst of their panting steeds, and at the word in they plunge, to stem the flood, and from the other shore push on with new vigor to surprise and seize their prey. The cavalcade is at length descried from the watch-tower of Jezreel.

One, and another, and another messenger from Joram hastens to meet and question Jehu ; and to the question, Is it peace? get no other but this rough and ominous reply, "What hast thou to do with peace? Get thee behind me"—fall to the rear, if you value your life!

Astonished, and their curiosity, if not their fears awakened, Joram and his ally, Ahaziah, king of Judah, throw themselves into their chariots to meet Jehu. He has been recognized by the keen eyes of the sentinel—"the driving," he tells the king, "is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he driveth furiously." They meet—place ominous of evil to Ahab's race—in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite ; him whose blood has been crying out for vengeance, How long, O Lord, how long ! Now the prayer is to be answered ; "the hour and the man are come."

Beyond replying, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many? Jehu wastes no time, nor words, upon the king. The answer has hardly left his lips when an arrow leaves his bow ; and swiftly cleaving the air, directed by a surer hand than his, quivers in Joram's heart. He dies. The mother speedily follows, treading on the heels of her son. Ere another hour has come, this proud, painted, false, treacherous, cruel, implacable, bloody woman, flung from a window by her slaves in answer to Jehu's appeal, Who is on my side? who? is turned into dog's meat—the dogs are crunching her bones on the streets of Jezreel. A princess, a king's daughter, a king's wife, a king's mother, what a fall was there! So let the persecutors of

the righteous, and the iniquity of high places perish!

Jehu has still more bloody work to do; and in doing it—as when the lash is in hand and his chariot goes bounding on—“he driveth furiously.” His eye does not pity, nor his hand spare, till he has emptied the last drop of the vial of heaven’s vengeance on the house and seed of Ahab. Seventy sons of that weak and wicked king are living in Samaria; ready to fill the vacant throne, and, if they are wanted, supply kings to all the neighboring nations. These cubs, as well as the bear, must be slain; these saplings, as well as the old tree, cut down; nor drop of Ahab’s blood be left in a living vein. With one stroke of his pen Jehu strikes off their heads. A letter, couched in bitter irony, and borne with speed to Samaria, challenges its rulers, adherents of the house of Ahab, to set up the best and bravest of the seventy, that he and Jehu may have a fair fight for the crown. The proposal fills these cowards with dismay. “Two kings stood not before him,” they said, “how then shall we stand?” Honor, oaths, fidelity, are given to the wind. False to their God, these men, as may be expected of all false to him, betray their trust. False to their masters, they barter their lives to save their own; and seventy ghastly heads are found one morning piled up by the gate of Jezreel.

Not yet appeased, Naboth’s blood, and that of the righteous whom Jezebel had slain, still cries on heaven for vengeance. Another quarry has to be struck down. Two-and-forty brethren of Amaziah, king of Judah, whose blood was tainted with that of Ahab, are, unsuspecting of evil, on

their way to pay a visit to their cousins—those whose heads are bleaching in the sun by the gate of Jezreel. The cousins meet, but not in this world. An opportune visit for Jehu: at one fell sweep he encloses the whole brood in his net; and while the famous character who is now to enter on the stage never wanted a man to stand before the Lord, and survived in his family to see thrones emptied, dynasties and kingdoms perish, Ahab has fulfilled his doom. His house is left unto him desolate; cut down root and branch. His sin—as, sooner or later, unless forgiven, all our sins shall do—has found him out; and in extinguishing his family a righteous God pays him back in the very coin by which, in destroying Naboth and all his children, he obtained unjust possession of the vineyard at Jezreel.

One great and yet bloodier work still waits Jehu's avenging arm. The priests and worshippers of Baal must be destroyed. For that purpose, and for such a sacrifice as was never offered in the idol's temple, he has a stroke of policy—a *coup d'état*—arranged, which only a man with cunning as profound as his daring was bold, would have conceived or ventured on. His is one of the greatest, boldest, bloodiest plots in history; and he is on his way to carry it into execution, and so finish the work God had given him to do, when he meets Jonadab, the son of Rechab. Astute enough to see that though he held a divine commission he must neglect the use of no means, and that none was more likely to promote his object than the countenance of Jonadab—a man distinguished alike for his patriotism and his piety, for the severity of his manners and the universal

esteem of the people—Jehu invites him to a seat in his chariot ; greeting this eminent Israelite, and original founder of all total abstinence societies, with these brave, pious words, Come, see my zeal for the Lord !

I would take occasion from this case to remark,—

1. That there is a zeal of selfishness which, though it may appear to be, is not zeal for the Lord.

Is thine heart right ? was the question with which Jehu accosted Jonadab ; and if the question be understood in its highest and holiest sense, his subsequent history proves that he had most need to put it to himself. The contrast between the spirit of that question and the character of his future life is such as to painfully remind us of these words, Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ?

God frequently uses the wicked as his tools—when the rod has served its purpose breaking it, and casting it into the fire. His own people also have been called and constrained, I may say against their natural feelings, to be so. Instruments of his righteous vengeance, they have had to shed the blood of others when they would rather have shed their own ; to afflict humanity when they would rather have poured wine and oil into its bleeding wounds ; to appear men of strife when they were sighing for peace, and, wearied of turmoil, controversy, and conflict, were saying, as they turned their eyes on the calm

heavens above, Oh that I had the wings of a dove, that I might fly away and be at rest ! But there is no evidence whatever of such a mind or temper in Jehu. There is no relenting ; no recoil from his stern mission ; no expression of pity. Apparently congenial to his nature, he found in his mission the means of gratifying his passions, and that personal ambition which, rather than zeal for the Lord, was, I fear, his animating, ruling principle. We would not deal unjustly, nor even very severely by him ; but when he had reached the summit of his ambition, and, leaving a bloody footprint on every step, had climbed to the throne, where was the zeal he boasted of—his zeal for the Lord ? It looks as if he had all along been consciously playing a part ; and, finding no further use of it, had now dropped the mask. We are told that “he took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart, but departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.”

It may be that Jehu deceived himself. We are unwilling to regard him as a hypocrite : and it is certain that men—with a heart which the word of God pronounces to be deceitful above all things as well as desperately wicked—have sometimes deceived themselves, more than the most famous jugglers or impostors have deceived others. And what made it easier for Jehu to do so was this, that the reformation of the land and its religious interests did not conflict with, but rather ran in the same direction as his own passions and ambition. The public interests and his own personal objects were in dangerous accord.

Such a position is a dangerous one for any man

to be placed in. There is no doubt to what the ship owes her progress when her course is up the stream, or the waters of an opposing tide are foaming on her bows ; her moving power is evidently a heavenly one—the wind that sings in her cordage, and fills her swelling sails. But the case may be otherwise. The tide, the current on whose bosom our barque is floating, may run in the very direction we wish to pursue ; and as in such a case we may be deceived as to the power that moves us, so it is easy for us to persuade ourselves that we are moved by zeal for the Lord when, I may say, we are not blown on by heavenly but only borne on by earthly influences—such as regard for our character ; such as the approbation of men ; such as the pride of consistency ; such as the gratification, perhaps, of what are more or less common to all, humane and charitable feelings.

Let a man examine himself, says an Apostle : and nothing stands more in need of being sifted, analyzed, and tested than our zeal for the Lord. Have not men preached Christ for contention ? Have not as large sacrifices been offered at the shrine of party as were ever laid on the altar of principle ? Has not vanity often had fully as much to do as humanity with raising asylums for the orphan, the houseless, and the sick—men in what the world regards as monuments of their generosity seeking but to gratify their ambition—a monument to themselves more enduring and honorable than brass or marble ? and have not men even burned at the stake, and died on the scaffold, and obtained a place for their names on the roll of martyrs, with no higher aim than that of earthly glory which

the soldier seeks in the deadly breach and at the cannon's fiery mouth? I do not say that any man's motives are altogether pure. Such an analysis as the Searcher of hearts could make would detect what was "of the earth earthy" in our noblest sacrifices and most holy services. Our wine is never without its water, nor our silver without its dross; nor we less entirely and absolutely dependent on the mercy of God and the merits of his Son than he who, when one spoke to him of his good works, replied, I take my good works and my bad works, and casting them into one heap, fly from both to Christ—to fall at his feet, crying, Save me, Lord, I perish.

Still, when zeal for our own ends and interests appears so like zeal for God; when the counterfeit bears so close a resemblance to good money that it needs a close eye to discern the difference and detect the cheat; when such as, in their natural honesty, would scorn to impose on others, or make a stalking-horse of religion, may impose on themselves; it behoves us to see that God, and not self, is the centre of our system; and that, in the words of the Apostle, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, not seeking our own glory, we do all to the glory of God.

2. There is a zeal without knowledge that is not zeal for the Lord. "I bear them witness," says Paul, speaking of his countrymen, "that they have a zeal, but not according to knowledge." Unless directed by that, zeal may be wasted, and worse than wasted. Baleful, as when it calls down fire from heaven, it may prove positively injurious to the cause of truth and righteousness.

And who can read the history of the Church, or almost of any section of it, without feelings of sorrow and regret that so much zeal has been expended on the outworks, and less important parts, of religion? The water that might have been turned with advantage on the green sward and grateful soil has been spent on barren and thankless sands; and like the lean kine of Pharaoh's dream which devoured the fat and were themselves none the fatter, how has zeal about ceremonies, forms of government, and modes of worship, without any advantage whatever to the interests of piety, outraged the gentle spirit of religion, and swallowed up the weightier matters of the law? Has the zeal been according to knowledge which, as if the outworks were more important than the citadel, gave more heed to matters of form than to those of faith?—that expending itself on the ornaments and walls of the temple, left the light in the lamp and the fire of the altar to expire. I cannot doubt that the prince of the powers of the air has had a hand in many of those storms about minor matters which have so often agitated, and, but for Christ's interposition, would have sunk his Church. Speaking of Satan, the Apostle says, We are not ignorant of his devices; and with such device as military commanders employ when they make a feint attack on some outwork that, while the defenders of a beleagured city fly to its protection, they may seize the citadel, Satan has raised many controversies about secondary matters—his object to kindle unholy passions, weaken the Church by divisions, and divert men's attention from Christ and him crucified, from souls and them saved,

Controversies will arise that are not to be avoided. "I came," says our Lord, "not to send peace on earth, but a sword. I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." It is also true that what the world regards as small matters may in the light of their consequences assume a character of the highest importance. Crowns have been lost and won on a narrow battle-field; a small hole in its hedge admitted the serpent into Eden; and solid rocks have been rent asunder by the tiny seed which wind, or bird of heaven, had dropped into their fissure. Yet when all the zeal, and money, and time, and prayers we can bestow are all too little for saving souls, it must be a melancholy spectacle to the angels of heaven, still more to Him who gave his blood to save us, to see the life-boat's crew turn away from those who with outstretched hands are crying, Save us; we perish!—to waste the precious moments in angry debates on the mending of a spar, or the shape and form of a sail.

We may well believe that; and without breach of charity doubt whether their zeal is not rather kindled of hell than of heaven, who are more zealous for the points on which they differ, than for the principles on which they agree with other Christians. He at least presents a wretched specimen of religion who labors more to convert Christian men to his own sectarian views than men who are no Christians to Christ and saving faith. This is zeal for a sect, certainly not for the Lord.

Not only so, but the worst passions have

animated, and the most shocking crimes been committed by such as have said with Jehu, Come, see my zeal for the Lord! Paul persecuted the Christians; and exceedingly mad against them, haled men and women to prison, compelling them to blaspheme; and thought the while that he did God service. Many others have done the like. The Inquisition, with all its unutterable cruelty and bloody horrors, sprung from religious zeal—of a kind. If zeal has bravely borne the fires of the stake, zeal also has kindled them—all the difference in some cases between the martyr whose memory we revere and his murderers whose names we load with infamy this, in the one case the zeal was, **and in** the other it was **not** according to knowledge. Excellent property as it is, when committed to such poor earthen vessels as we are, zeal is apt to turn acrid and sour. We have need, therefore, when most zealous for the Lord, or fancy ourselves to be so, to see what spirit we are of. Are the objects we aim at, and the means we use to accomplish them, such as God approves? He will not be served with “strange fire;” and repudiating all uncharitableness, and bitterness, and intolerance, and persecution, Jesus Christ will have his followers support his cause and defend his crown by no other sword, and in no other spirit, than his own. Intolerance, fierce, uncharitable passions, the bitter tongue, pens dipped in gall, are not zeal for the Lord; but weapons, equally with Peter’s sword, repudiated and forbidden by Him who, turning to that disciple said, Put up again thy sword into its place; they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

3. Being on their guard against a spurious, let men cultivate a true zeal for the Lord.

Zeal is an essential as well as excellent characteristic of true religion. Dead bodies acquire the temperature of surrounding objects—not so living ones. Hence plants are less cold than the snow that wraps them, and the polar bear lies in her icy cave with blood as warm as our own. Wherever there is life, there is heat; nor is it till death ensues that the brow has the touch of marble and the body becomes as cold as the grave it lies in, or the waves that are its floating sepulchre. So wherever there is Christian principle, a new and spiritual life, there is, and must be, zeal. There may be, and are, different degrees of it—just as the blood of some animals is warmer, and the lustre of some stars is brighter, and the perfume of some flowers is sweeter than that of others: but zeal for the Lord, more or less developed, will be found in all true Christians. Continued torpor is as incompatible with spiritual as with animal existence: and cold indifference to the cause of Christ, the glory of God, the good of souls, the honor and interests of the Redeemer's kingdom as great a moral as this is a physical impossibility—a man who does not breathe, or a sun that does not shine, or a fire that does not burn. Piety, as has been well remarked, may consist with error but cannot with indifference—and if such be our state, our usual and permanent condition, in imagining ourselves Christians, it is certain that “we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

Nor should we be contented with a zeal that smoulders rather than burns; and, giving forth

more smoke than flame, goes off in speeches rather than actions, in good wishes rather than in good, brave, self-denying works. If I had as many lives in my body as I have hairs on my head, said a martyr, as he stood on the reeking scaffold, I would give them all for Christ. Such is the zeal we should aim at, and pray for; and which, if our prayers spring from the heart, we do pray for in asking that the same mind may be in us that was in Jesus Christ. But how is that mind, any semblance of that mind, in him who calculates not how much but how little he can with some regard to decency give to the cause of Christ; for how small a composition of the debt he owes to Jesus conscience will grant him a discharge; how he can best excuse himself for avoiding sacrifices on Christ's behalf which would no more than a cobweb stop a man bent on making money, or winning fame, or gratifying his appetites? In such a case where is our love, and our likeness to Him who gave Himself—his soul to the wrath of God, his brow to the thorns, and his body to the cross—for us, saying, as well he might, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up"? There is no soldier whose bones lie bleaching on the battle-field, nor pale student whose life is wasting with the oil of his midnight lamp, nor even squalid wretch who walks our streets in poverty and rags, but may put most Christians to the blush. To say nothing of the world's, Satan has servants who scruple at no sacrifice, the most precious and costly. I could produce thousands who have sold all, and parted with all—money, health, character, peace of mind, wife, children, everything man counts dear, to serve

their master—but their master is not Christ, nor their zeal for the Lord. It is sad to think that more is done, is suffered, is sacrificed for drink and the devil than for Jesus Christ. The Lord have mercy on us! May he pour out on us a larger measure of his own Spirit, and of Christ's!—that kindled of heaven, lighted at the altar fire, associated with the charity that thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, and hopeth all things, our zeal may be a flame that enlightening, warming, and blessing others, consumes none but ourselves.

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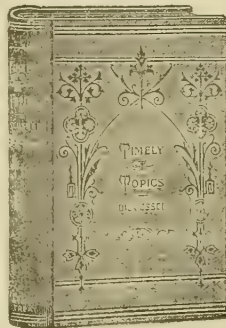
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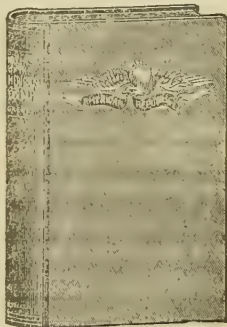
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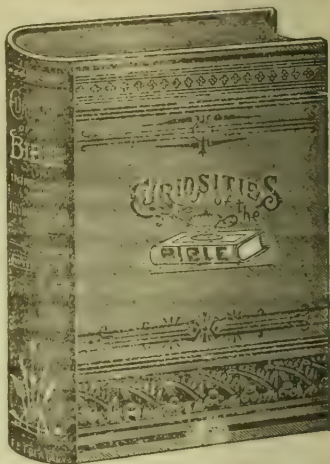
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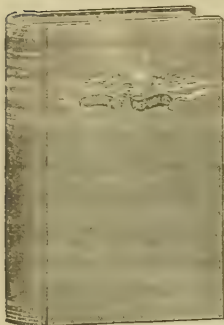
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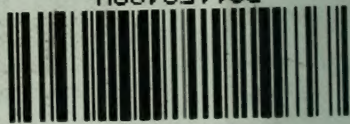
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